The Deadly Art of Science
Chapter 1
The Man with Two Skulls

CHICAGO, 1930

THEY'RE GETTING AWAY!

I CAN SEE THAT, HONEY.

DAD. IT'S NIGHTINGALE WHEN WE'RE ON A MISSION.

SKREEEE

VROOM

APOLOGIES, DARLING.

YOU DID THAT ONE ON PURPOSE.

I DID.

THEY'LL GO LEFT.

HOW CAN YOU TELL?

BECAUSE I'M BETTING ***THESE*** GUYS ARE IN ***CAHOOTS*** WITH THOSE ***PALOOKAS*** FROM LAST WEEK, AND THAT ***THEY*** DON'T HAVE MUCH IMAGINATION WHEN IT COMES TO GETAWAYS ***EITHER.***

GOOD INSTINCTS.

GLENDALE HEIGHTS

DOWNERS GROVE

53

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INSTINCT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. IT'S NOT EVERY DAY THE ***OUTFIT*** BREAKS INTO A LABORATORY, Y'KNOW.

NO, IT'S ***NOT.*** ANYTHING COME THROUGH THE WIRES ON THE LAB ITSELF?

ZILCH.

THINK THE DUNCES FIGURED OUT WE TAPPED THEIR LINES?

NOT IN A MILLION YEARS. THEY PROBABLY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF THE ROBBERY. ONLY SPECIFICS ON THE LAB ARE "U OF C" AND "COSMIC RAYS."

SKREEEEE

VROOM

WELL, THAT'S ***USELESS.***

IT'S THE PITS.

FINALLY, A CLEAR SHOT.

BKOW

PFOOOM

AHHH!

SON OF A--!

SKREEEREEE

AAAAHHHHH!

DAD? DAD!

THE GOOD NEWS IS OUR **FRIENDS** FROM THE OUTFIT WON'T BE COMMITTING ANY MORE ROBBERIES.

AND THE **BAD** NEWS?

THERE'S NO **INTERROGATING** THEM.

I WISH YOU'D STOP KILLING OUR MARKS!

IT'S NOT **MY** FAULT THEY CRASHED.

NOT **ENTIRELY.**

WELL, WELL. YOU BOYS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE **CHICAGO** OUTFIT.

STATE OF NEW YORK - DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION AND FINANCE - BUREAU OF MOTOR VEHICLES

OPERATOR'S LICENSE

LICENSE NO. 3674735

Anthony E. Longo

226 146th St.

anhattan, N.Y.

D.O.B.	COLOR	SEX	WEIGHT
9 18 1902	W.	M.	170
HEIGHT	COLOR OF EYES	COLOR OF HAIR	
5ft. 10in.	Brown	Black	

WE'RE GOING TO NEW YORK.

NEW YORK CITY, ONE MONTH LATER

=SIGH=

NOTHING EXCITING **EVER** HAPPENS AROUND HERE.

ROBO? I SHALL REQUIRE ANOTHER PAIR OF HANDS IF WE ARE TO ***PIERCE*** THE SUBATOMIC ***VEIL*** TONIGHT.

FIIIIINE.

WHAT YA NEED? DIALS TWISTED? SWITCHES FLIPPED?

SCIENCE IS A SLOW PROCESS OF ***CAREFUL*** SCRUTINY, ROBO. IT'S NOT ALL WHIZZ BANG SHOOT 'EM UP ***COWBOYS.***

COWBOYS?

DON'T SASS BACK.

JUST FLIP YOUR SWITCHES.

TURN YOUR DIALS.

ZKAKZAKOW

HMM. OH, YES. FASCINATING.

I BET.

WHRR WHRR WHRR PFEHHH

FIZZLE

WOW. LOOK AT THAT. IT DIDN'T WORK AGAIN. WHAT A SURPRISE.

FAILURES ARE WHAT LEAD US TO SUCCESS.

WAKE ME UP WHEN WE GET THERE...

LATER...

SNATCH

REAL SCIENCE ADVENTURE

IRONHIDE!

10¢

SCOURGE OF THE OLD WEST

LATER STILL...

SWIFF SWUFF

DON'T *MAKE* ME COME IN THERE!

BOOM

SKREEEEEE

BANANA OIL!
HEY! WAIT UP!
SKREEEE
SKREEEE-EEE-EEE
YES, WELL, PARDON ME, LADS...
WATCHITYAMUGS!
SKRASH
...THIS IS WHERE I GET OFF!
UH, ANYBODY ALIVE?
GHAK...
HOLY SOCKS. GANGSTERS!
M'ACHIN' HEAD...

DO YOU KNOW AL CAPONE?
WHAT?
WHAT'S HE LIKE?
GEDOUTTAHERE.
WHAT'S HE EAT FOR BREAKFAST?
YEAH, LEMME ASK 'IM.
I HAVE GOT TO STOP DOING THAT.
SHOOT TO WOUND, SHOOT TO WOUND.
WOW, AND A GUNFIGHTER!
D'AH!

OUT OF THE WAY!
IS THAT A SMITH AND WESSON?
WHAT-- NO!
DAMMIT!
JEEZ!
BKOW
HEY! COME BACK!
A COLT?
NO!
REMINGTON!
DOES THIS LOOK ANYTHING LIKE A--NO, GO AWAY!

WHERE'D HE...?

DAMMIT!

OOF!

WHY DO YOU WEAR THE MASK?

THE *OTHER* ONE!

ARE YOU *DEFORMED?*

DEAD.

C'MON, WHERE *IS* IT...

OR ARE YOU PART OF A **SECRET ORDER?**

WHAT?

YOUR MASK. **OOH!** IS IT FOR **ASSASSINS?**

GO AWAY BEFORE SOMEONE **HURTS** YOU.

LIKE WHO?

ME.

BLAM

OWW.

OF COURSE THE ONE THAT GOT *AWAY* WOULD HAVE IT.

HAVE WHAT?

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO MAKE YOU *LEAVE ME ALONE?*

THIS IS A *TEST,* ISN'T IT.

OF MY PATIENCE?

OF MY *COMMITMENT!*

WHAT?

YOU'VE GOT TO REFUSE ME *THREE TIMES* BEFORE YOU'LL BE MY MENTOR.

I'M *NOT* YOUR *MENTOR.*

THAT'S TWO!

NO, IT WASN'T.

WAS THAT?

WHERE DID YOU GET THIS IDEA?

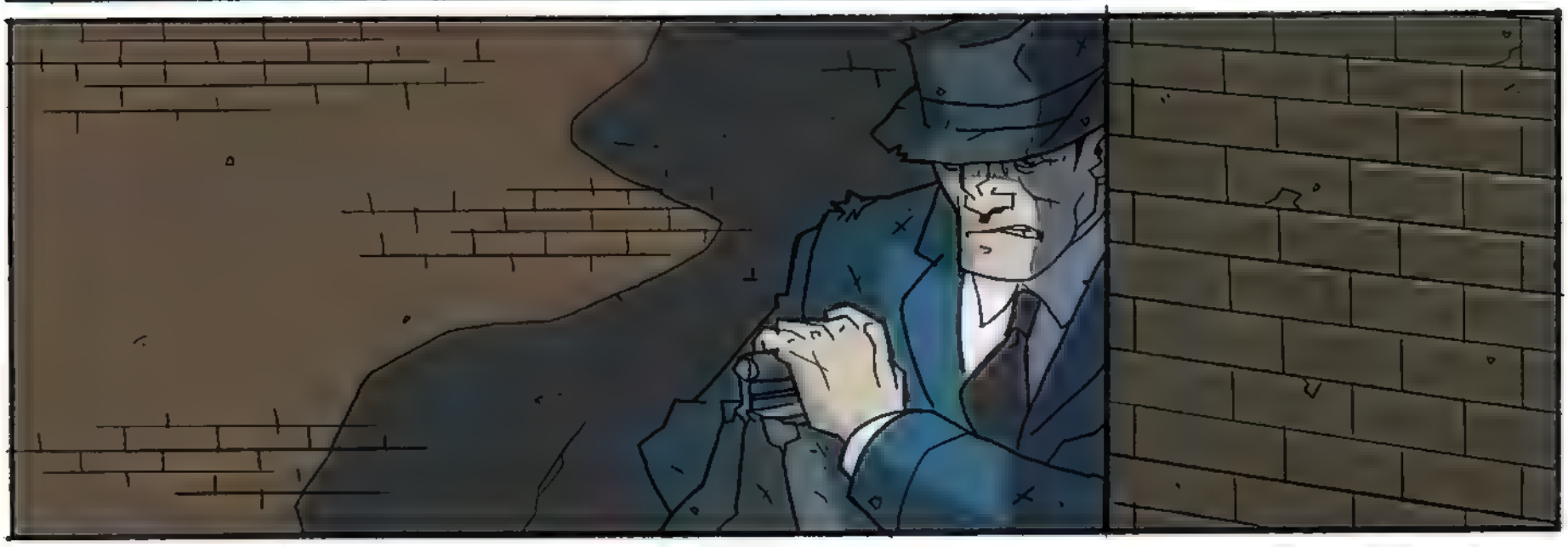
FROM *REAL SCIENCE ADVENTURE.*

A *PULP?*

AN ILLUSTRATED PERIODICAL.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT NONSENSE YOU'VE FILLED YOUR HEAD WITH, BUT ***LISTEN*** TO ME. YOU ARE ***DANGEROUSLY*** CLOSE TO STUMBLING INTO ONE OF THE DARK, ***SECRET*** CORNERS OF THE WORLD. A PLACE WHERE ***EVERYTHING*** THAT KEEPS YOU SAFE NO LONGER APPLIES. GO BACK TO YOUR HOME. GO BACK TO READING YOUR RIDICULOUS LITTLE FICTIONS. PRETEND YOU NEVER MET ME AND ENJOY A LONG LIFE.

THAT WAS TWO!



TAROT TO NIGHTINGALE.

I READ YOU. DID YOU ACQUIRE THE PACKAGE?

THERE WERE... COMPLICATIONS.

GETTING SLOPPY IN YOUR OLD AGE, DAD?

START RECORDING **ALL** THE MAFIA TAPS. ONE OF THEM'S ON FOOT AND I'M BETTING HE'S IN NO MOOD TO **STAY** THAT WAY. HE'LL CALL FOR A RIDE IF HE HASN'T ALREADY.

WILL DO.

HEY, WAIT!

ON MY WAY. PREP THE GARAGE.

VRRROOOOM

DID YOU FIND OUT WHAT THEY WERE AFTER AT LEAST?

NO. WE'LL HAVE TO FIND OUT WHO OWNS THE WAREHOUSE AND WORK FROM THERE.

LATER...

49

OPEN SESAME.

SKRCH

CRANKA CRANKA CRANK

ANY LUCK?

HM? I GOT ALL THE RECORDING CYLINDERS UP, BUT NOT MUCH ACTIVITY ON THEM. I THINK WE *MISSED* THE CALL.

IF THERE WAS ONE.

YEAH. I PICKED UP A LEAD FROM THE COPS THOUGH! THE WAREHOUSE IS OWNED BY *F. A. MITCHELL-HEDGES.*

COULDA *SWORN* HE...

COULD BE A *WALLCLIMBING* CAR. NO, THAT'S STUPID, THERE'S NO TIRE MARKS ON THE WALL...

BUT THERE ARE TIRE MARKS LEADING INTO THE WALL.

I DIDN'T ASK IF *YOU* HEARD IT. I *SAID* THE ENGINE WAS PINGING WHEN YOU BROUGHT HER IN.

GRRRRRK

A SECRET HIDEOUT, I KNEW IT!

KTINK CLINK

NO. NO, NO, *NO.* HOW'D YOU *FIND* ME?!

I FOLLOWED YOU.

WELL DONE. GO AWAY NOW.

WOW, ARE YOU REALLY *THE* ATOMIC ROBOT?

PLEASE, CALL ME ROBO.

WE'RE NOT CALLING YOU *ANYTHING* BECAUSE YOU'RE *LEAVING.*

NOT A CHANCE! I'M YOUR NEW *PARTNER.*

I WORK ALONE.

HOW MANY DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE YOU--

THAT'S THREE TIMES!

YOU WORK WITH ME.

--WHAT? NO, THAT'S DIFFERENT, HONEY.

BESIDES, NOW I KNOW YOUR TRUE IDENTITY. YOU HAVE TO KILL ME OR LET ME JOIN YOU. AND YOU ALREADY TRIED KILLING ME AND THAT DIDN'T WORK.

DAD! YOU SHOT HIM?

WHY AM I THE ONE YOU'RE YELLING AT? HE BUNGLED TONIGHT'S MISSION! HE BROKE INTO OUR SANCTUM!

I THINK IT SHOWS INITIATIVE! AND THAT HE'S BULLETPROOF.

YOU COULDN'T PICK A BETTER MENTOR THAN JACK TAROT, GUNFIGHTER!

I'M HELEN, BY THE WAY, PLEASED TO MEET YOU.

UH, L- LIKEWISE.

MEANWHILE, AT THE DOCKS...

BOSS DECOCO AIN'T TOO *HAPPY* ABOUT ALL THIS.

WHAT TOOK SO LONG?

YEAH, GOOD TO SEE YOU *TOO*, DOC.

I HAVEN'T TIME FOR *PLEASANTRIES*. IS THAT THE *ITEM*?

HE ISN'T *PAID* TO HAVE AN OPINION ON THE MATTER.

IT'S CAUSIN' *TROUBLE*. THE POLICE *KNOW* THEIR PLACE. BUT WE GOT THIS MASKED *WACKADOO* DOGGIN' US NOW. HELL, HE *KILLED* KNUCKLES.

A ***TERRIBLE*** LOSS, I'M SURE. YOU'RE A VAST CRIMINAL SYNDICATE, ***YES?*** IF THIS ***VIGILANTE*** IS A PROBLEM, THEN ***KILL*** HIM.

IT AIN'T THAT EASY. IN ***FACT,*** I'M THINKIN' IT MIGHT BE EASIER FOR BOSS DECOCO IF HE DIDN'T ***HAVE*** THIS PROBLEM NO MORE.

=ERK=

MR. DECOCO RECEIVES ***AMPLE*** REMUNERATION FOR HIS SERVICES AND ***ANY*** DIFFICULTIES THAT ARISE THEREFROM.

OH, DON'T WORRY. YOU'D KNOW IT ALREADY IF YOU WERE GOING TO BE ***KILLED.***

NO, YOU ***EARNED*** YOUR LIFE TONIGHT.

The Deadly Art of Science
Chapter 2
The Robot Who Wouldn't Go Away!

WHAT'S THAT DO?
DON'T TOUCH IT.
WHAT'S THIS FOR?
NOT YOU.
YOU'VE GOT THREE OF THESE! DO THEY BREAK?
LET'S NOT FIND OUT.
OH, DAD, PIPE DOWN! HE'S NOT GOING TO BREAK ANYTHING.
THANKS ONLY TO MY DILIGENCE IN KEEPING HIM AWAY FROM ANYTHING DANGEROUS.
GUNS!
THIS IS WHY YOU HAVE TO LEAVE.

YOU'RE OVER-REACTING.

YEAH, LISTEN TO MISS-- UH...?

MCALLISTER. HELEN MCALLISTER.

THAT'S GREAT. LET'S TELL THE STRANGER OUR SECRET IDENTITIES.

HE'S NOT A STRANGER. HE'S ATOMIC ROBO!

BESIDES, SHE DIDN'T TELL ME YOURS.

DONOVAN MCALLISTER.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

BUT WHEN THE MASK GOES ON, THEY CALL HIM JACK TAROT, SCOURGE OF THE CHICAGO CRIME SYNDICATE!

WHY TAROT? ARE YOU A GYPSY? DO YOU HEX PEOPLE? CAN A ROBOT DO HEXES?

THERE'S NO HEXING! THE PRESS CALLS ME THAT BECAUSE I LEAVE A TAROT CARD TO MARK MY WORK. IT INSPIRES FEAR AMONG CRIMINAL ELEMENTS. MAKES THEM CLUMSY.

YOU DIDN'T LEAVE A CARD WHEN YOU KILLED THAT MOBSTER EARLIER.

WELL, I DON'T DO IT WHEN I'M GATHERING CLUES, DO I? THEY'D KNOW I'M ON TO THEM AND IT'D ONLY MAKE MY JOB THAT MUCH HARDER.

NO. HE'S TOO CONSPICUOUS. ***WE*** WORK IN THE SHADOWS. ***HE'S*** GOT LIGHT-UP EYES FOR GOD'S SAKE. HE'LL GET HIMSELF KILLED.

FINE. HE CAN STAY BEHIND AND WORK WITH ***ME,*** THEN. IT'S ABOUT TIME I HAD ***SOMEONE*** TO HELP ON MY END OF THINGS.

ALL THE ***REAL*** WORK IS DONE BACK HERE ANYWAY.

HE JUST SHOOTS PEOPLE UP AND WRECKS THE CAR.

THIS IS ONE OF THOSE THINGS WHERE YOU'VE ALREADY MADE UP YOUR MIND, ISN'T IT.

YES! IT IS.

HEH, ***GOSH,*** I--

AHEM. GETTING HIM IN THE FIELD ***MIGHT*** NOT BE SUCH A BAD IDEA. JUST TO TAKE HIM OFF ***YOUR*** HANDS, OF COURSE. SURE, IT'S ***ABSURDLY*** DANGEROUS, BUT IF HE'S A QUICK LEARNER HE MIGHT SURVIVE.

IT'S AN ***ENDGAME*** TACTIC. MAKES THEM ***FEEL*** THE NOOSE TIGHTENING.

THIS IS GREAT STUFF. I'M ALREADY LEARNING!

NO. ***STOP THAT.*** YOU'RE NOT LEARNING A ***DAMN*** THING. I'M ***NOT*** YOUR MENTOR AND I NEVER ***WILL*** BE.

OH, YOU'RE JUST MAD HE FOUND OUR SECRET HIDEOUT! WHICH, BY THE WAY, SPEAKS TO HIS INGENUITY. LOOK, HE'S A SUPER-STRONG ***BULLETPROOF*** SCIENTIST. HE'S THE GREATEST TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT IN HISTORY!

WELL, I DON'T LIKE TO ***BRAG...***

WHY WOULD YOU? IT WAS TESLA'S ACHIEVEMENT.

ER, YEAH, WELL...

HE'S GOT BRAINS ***AND*** BRAWN. WE CAN'T HAVE ENOUGH OF EITHER, CONSIDERING WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST. ROBO AND TESLA EAT THIS STUFF FOR ***BREAKFAST.***

ACTUALLY, HE HAS ***CRACKERS...***

SHH.

I BET THEY'D KNOW ***SOMETHING*** ABOUT THE WEIRD SCIENCE CRIME SPREE WE'VE BEEN TRACKING FOR ***MONTHS.*** WE NEED LEADS AND ALL WE'VE GOT ARE ***QUESTIONS.***

REALLY?!

...YYYYYYES.

THANK YOU, MR. JACK, **THANK YOU!** YOU WON'T REGRET IT!

OH, IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT.

I CAN START RIGHT AWAY.

THAT'S... FANTASTIC.

I JUST GOTTA--OH, **CRUMBS!**

I GOTTA GET BACK TO THE **LAB!** MR. TESLA **CAN'T** FIND OUT I WAS OUT ALL NIGHT **ADVENTURING!**

DON'T USE THE--

CRRRRRK

--SECRET DOOR...

I'LL FIX THIS. YOU GET READY.

FOR?

WE'RE GOING TO INTERVIEW THIS MITCHELL-HEDGES FELLOW. FIND OUT WHAT OUR HIGH-TECH HOODLUMS TOOK.

AH, ROBO. I DIDN'T HEAR YOU COME DOWN-STAIRS.

UH, NOPE. I CAME DOWN, UM, EARLIER.

HRMMM...

I'M OLD, ROBO, NOT SENILE.

YOU'RE WEARING YESTERDAY'S CLOTHES.

SIR?

UH. NO, I'M NOT?

YOU'RE A SHAMBLES, ROBO. ANY FOOL COULD SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE.

ER... I...

YOU SPENT ALL NIGHT CLEANING THE GARAGE TO AVOID YOUR STUDIES.

THAT...OKAY, YES. I DID THAT THING.

A DOCTORATE IS NOT THE END OF YOUR LEARNING.

I KNOW, MR. TESLA.

GO ON, NOW. CHANGE BEFORE BREAKFAST. WE HAVE WORK TO CONDUCT AFTERWARD.

VECTOR ANALYSIS

GIVEN THE RESULTS OF LAST NIGHT'S EXPERIMENT--

Y'MEAN THE FAILURE?

THERE IS NO FAILURE IN SCIENCE, ROBO. ONLY MISSTEPS ON THE PATH TO GREATER UNDERSTANDING.

LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TO PHYSICS TODAY, HM?

ZAKAKOOM

CAREFUL. THE REACTION IS NOT YET SELF-SUSTAINING.

YEAH, YEAH.

KAKAZZAKA

SHOULD IT BE DOING THAT?

ZKOOM

I HAVE NO IDEA.

WHAT ABOUT THAT?

ZKOOOOM

MEANWHILE...

I SWEAR, A MAN *YOUR* AGE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO TIE A DECENT KNOT *HIMSELF*.

YEAH, YEAH. I'M A WALKING DISASTER. JUST FOLLOW MY LEAD WHEN WE GET UP THERE.

GOOD AFTERNOON, SIR. I'M MR. *TYLER*. AND THIS IS MS. *WINDSOR*. WE'RE FROM THE TIMES. WE'RE LOOKING FOR MR. MITCHELL-HEDGES?

YOU FOUND 'IM

WE'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOU ABOUT LAST NIGHT'S ROBBERY.

...SO, YOU CAN UNDERSTAND MY CONCERN. *NOTHING* ELSE WAS TOUCHED. THAT'S NOT A COINCIDENCE, MR. TYLER. THE MEN WHO DID THIS KNEW *EXACTLY* WHAT WAS AT STAKE. WHICH, I CAN TELL YOU, IS MORE THAN THE *POLICE* KNOW. THE *OAFS*.

YOU'RE SAYING THE POLICE HAVEN'T TAKEN THE THEFT *SERIOUSLY?*

I SHOULD SAY *NOT!* FOR GOD'S SAKE, IT'S A *CRYSTAL SKULL!* A REPOSITORY OF *LOST ATLANTEAN KNOWLEDGE*.

IN THE WRONG HANDS, ITS POWER COULD BRING RUIN TO OUR ***ENTIRE*** CIVILIZATION.

TO SAFEGUARD IT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS, OF COURSE.

YOUNG LADY, I KNOW YOU'RE ONLY DOING YOUR JOURNALISTIC DUTY, SO I'LL IGNORE YOUR IMPLICATION THAT I WOULD USE THE POWER OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL FOR MY OWN ***SELFISH GAIN.***

AND WHAT WERE ***YOUR*** PLANS FOR THE SKULL, MR. MITCHELL-HEDGES?

OF COURSE.

THIS IS A ***VERY*** NICE HOUSE, MR. MITCHELL-HEDGES. ACCORDING TO YOUR OWN STATEMENTS YOUR FORTUNES INCREASED QUITE A BIT LAST YEAR IN BELIZE? ***SAY,*** THAT'S WHEN AND WHERE YOU CLAIM TO HAVE FOUND THE SKULL, ***ISN'T*** IT?

YOU COMPLAIN ABOUT NEVER BEING ALLOWED TO DO FIELD WORK, AND THEN YOU DO THINGS LIKE ***THAT.***

OH, ***PLEASE.*** THAT OLD HUCKSTER WAS JUST MAD I CALLED HIM OUT. THE ONLY POWER THAT SKULL HAS IS OVER THE ***GULLIBLE.***

UNDOUBTEDLY. BUT IF YOU'D HUMORED HIM, WE MIGHT'VE SEEN WHERE HE STORED THE SKULL AND DEDUCED ***SOMETHING*** ABOUT WHO TOOK IT AND WHY.

WE KNOW WHO TOOK IT. ***GANGSTERS.***

BUT ***WHICH*** GANGSTERS? AND WHO'S PULLING THEIR STRINGS? WHAT PROFIT IS THERE IN ***SUPPOSEDLY*** MYSTIC SKULLS?

Y'GOTTA ASK?

BUT FOR ***GANGSTERS?*** THEY PROFIT FROM VICE, NOT FROM... THEATRICS.

THEY'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO STEAL COSMIC RAY SCIENCE STUFF EITHER, BUT THEY'VE BEEN DOING THAT ***TOO.***

DO WE THINK THESE CRIMES ARE CONNECTED JUST BECAUSE THEY'RE ATYPICAL? IT COULD BE A RIVAL FAMILY TRYING TO COUNTER HIGH SCIENCE STUFF WITH MYSTICAL ***HOOEY.***

LIKE THEY THINK THE SKULL CAN GIVE THEIR OPERATIONS THE KIND OF BOOST IT GAVE OL' FRED BACK THERE?

OR MAYBE ***HE*** HIRED THEM TO "STEAL" IT.

THUS ADDING TO THE SKULL'S AIR OF MYSTERY AND LEGITIMACY?

IT'S ALL SPECULATION AT THIS POINT. A SHAME WE DIDN'T GET TO INSPECT THE CRIME SCENE ***ISN'T*** IT.

YEAH, ***OKAY,*** OKAY. POINT TAKEN. I'M BETTER WITH MACHINES THAN PEOPLE. SO NOW WHAT?

LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN GET FROM THE POLICE REPORT. IF FREDERICK'S MISSING SKULL IS CONNECTED TO THE SCIENCE CRIMES, WE MAY FIND THE LINK THERE.

TESLA'S HOUSTON STREET LAB

FOOOM

OH, STOP *PLAYING* WITH THE ANOMALY. WE'VE *EXPERIMENTS* TO CONDUCT IF WE'RE TO DETERMINE THE CREATURE'S DIMENSION OF ORIGIN.

MR. TESLA, DID YOU INVENT A *VAMPIRE MACHINE?*

PROBABLY NOT. IN THE FIRST PLACE, WE CAN'T BE SURE IT'S VAMPIRIC.

IT'S GOT FANGS AND IT'S *BITING* ME!

LET US BE *SCIENTIFIC,* ROBO. A TRUE VAMPIRE WOULDN'T WASTE TIME ON A BLOODLESS AUTOMATON.

AUGH! IT'S GETTING *DROOL* ON ME.

EVEN SO. THERE'S MORE TO THE NOSFERATU THAN *DROOL.*

ROBO, IT IS MY CONJECTURE THAT THE ELECTRONOSCOPE IS, IN FACT, A PORTAL MACHINE TO *ANOTHER UNIVERSE.*

OR THE SUBATOMIC WORLD IS ACTUALLY FILLED WITH MONSTERS.

EITHER WAY WE STAND AT THE FOREFRONT OF A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF PHYSICS.

LATER...

THE *TESLAGRAPH* WILL PRODUCE A DETAILED THREE-DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF THE CREATURE'S INTERNAL STRUCTURE BY SENDING HIGH-ENERGY ELECTRICAL CURRENT THROUGH ITS BODY... REDUCING THE CREATURE TO *ASH* IN THE PROCESS.

I'VE NOTICED YOU HAVE A VERY *FLEXIBLE* VIEW OF PACIFISM.

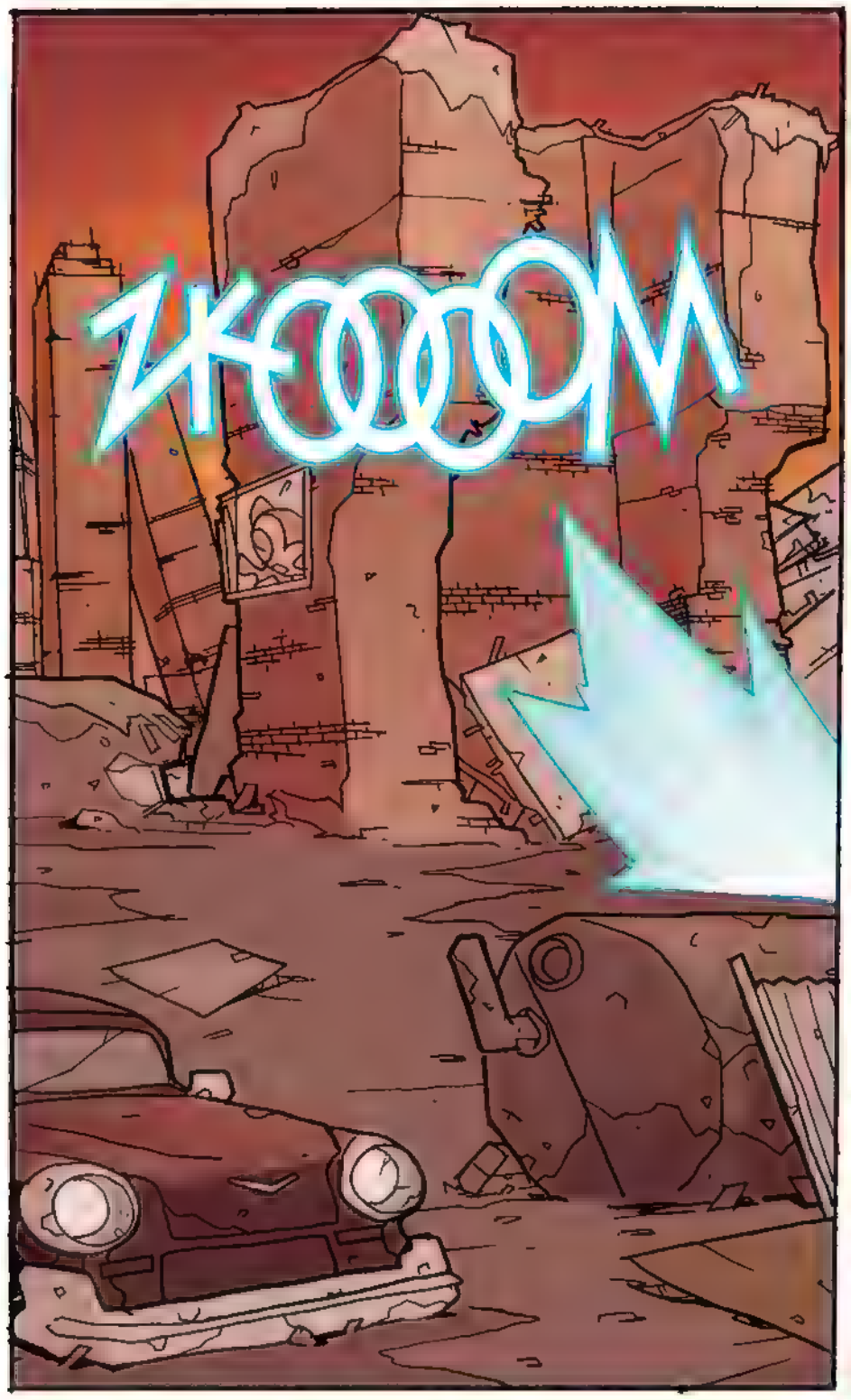
WE CONDUCTED *TESTS.* IT FEELS NO PAIN, HAS FOUR *DIFFERENT* BLOOD TYPES, *AND* NO PULSE. IT'S NOT TECHNICALLY *ALIVE.*

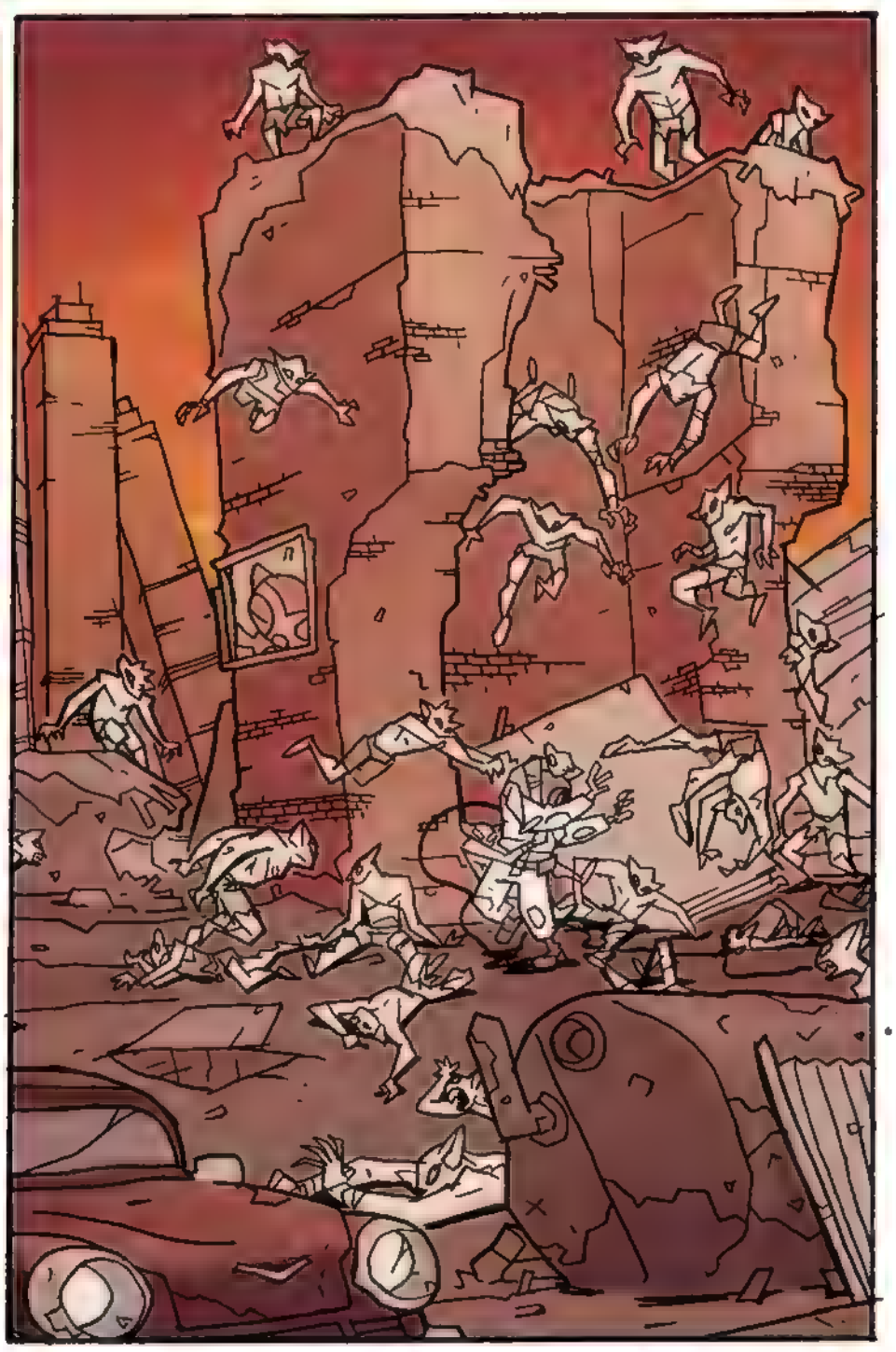
NEITHER AM I.

HMM. I SEE YOUR POINT, ROBO.

WE SHALL EXPLORE THEIR WORLD FOR SIGNS OF LIFE AND CULTURE.

ZAK-AK-KOOM!


ZKOOOOM



ZKZZKOWKRAKATHOOOM

SHUT IT DOWN!

ZKOOOOM

WHRR WHRR WHRR

ROBO! WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT DID YOU FIND?

WHATEVER THEY ARE, THEY'RE **NOT** ALIVE. NOT ANYMORE. THEY'RE JUST RAGE AND HUNGER. AND **SUPER STRONG.**

WE CANNOT LET MORE OF THESE CREATURES INTO OUR WORLD. ROBO, WE MUST ***DESTROY*** THE PORTAL MACHINE.

GLADLY.

THE SECRETS OF THE ATOM WILL HAVE TO WAIT.

THAT'S DONE.

AS IS OUR "CAPTIVE."

NOW WHAT?

BACK TO THE PLANNING STAGES.

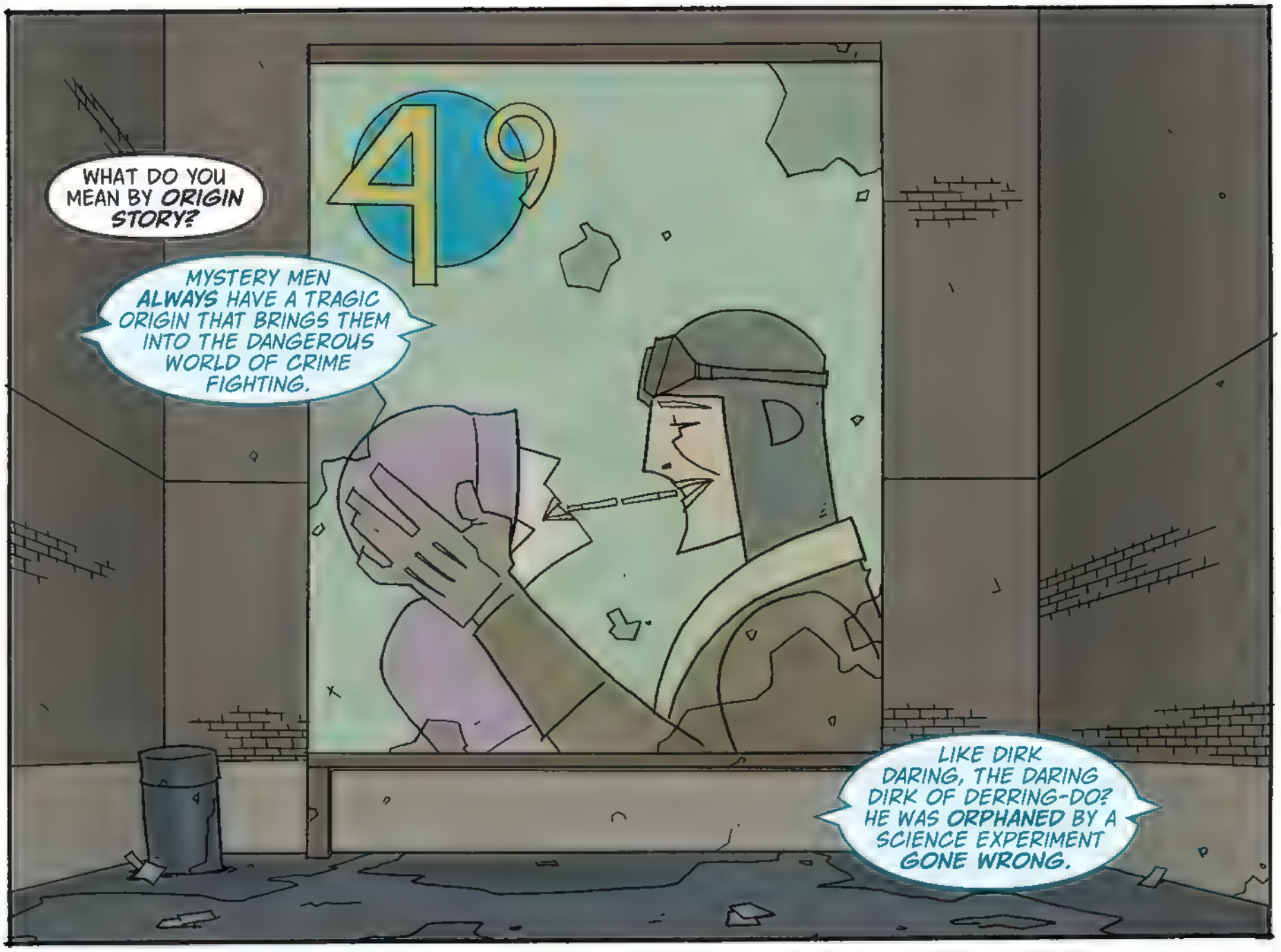
HOURS OF QUIETLY CONTEMPLATING THE UNIVERSE...?

OF COURSE.

SWELL.

LATER...

LATER STILL...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WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY ORIGIN STORY?
MYSTERY MEN ALWAYS HAVE A TRAGIC ORIGIN THAT BRINGS THEM INTO THE DANGEROUS WORLD OF CRIME FIGHTING.
LIKE DIRK DARING, THE DARING DIRK OF DERRING-DO? HE WAS ORPHANED BY A SCIENCE EXPERIMENT GONE WRONG.
ONLY LATER WE LEARN IT WAS SABOTAGE BY HIS FATHER'S ARCH-NEMESIS DR. NEFARIOUS.
DO YOU HAVE AN ARCH-NEMESIS?
HAVE YOU READ ANYTHING THAT WASN'T A COMIC BOOK?
NO, I--
MR. TESLA HAS MR. EDISON, BUT THEY HAVEN'T CLASHED SINCE THE RASPUTIN INCIDENT. AND MR. TESLA WASN'T EVEN THERE.
WHAT DOES RASPUTIN HAVE TO--
OR TAKE IRONSIDE. HIS WIFE AND KIDS WERE CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE BETWEEN TWO GANGS OF OUTLAWS, SO HE--
ROBO, IF YOU DO NOTHING ELSE TODAY, THEN DISABUSE YOURSELF OF THIS MAD NOTION THAT THE REAL WORLD IS ANYTHING LIKE YOUR SCIENTIFICTION MAGAZINES.
YOU'D BE SURPRISED.

I GOT SOMETHING, BOYS. POLICE ON THE SCENE. NYU. BROOKLYN CAMPUS. SOME KINDA SHOOTOUT. WITH A *MONSTER.*

NYU, BROOKLYN? BET IT'S THE ENGINEERING SCHOOL.

KEEP RECORDING. THEY MIGHT SCREW UP AND SAY SOMETHING *USEFUL* WHILE I'M IN TRANSIT.

WHILE *WE'RE* IN TRANSIT.

THERE AREN'T *WORDS* FOR HOW UNPREPARED YOU ARE. NO, *YOU* CAN STAY HERE WITH...

JUST STAY IN THE CAR.

THE HECK WITH **THAT!** WHAT AM I GONNA LEARN FROM THE **CAR?**

HOW TO **NOT** GET ME **KILLED...**

AND WHEN DO I GET A **GUN?**

NEVER.

C'MON. I'VE DONE **SOME** ADVENTURING. FOUGHT A MONSTER FROM SPACE A WHILE BACK.

WHAT?

AND WRESTLED WITH VAMPIRE MONSTERS FROM ANOTHER **UNIVERSE** JUST THIS AFTERNOON!

YEAH, SAYING THINGS LIKE THAT IS GOING TO MAKE ME WANT TO TRUST YOU WITH FIREARMS.

IT'S TRUE!

OF COURSE IT IS.

NIGHTINGALE. WHAT'S THE LATEST?

MULTIPLE OFFICERS DOWN. THEY'VE GOT THE THING CORNERED IN A LAB ONE BLOCK UP FROM YOU. BACKUP TO ARRIVE SHORTLY.

WE'LL HAVE TO ACT FAST.

POWELL'S IRISH PUB

YOU. STAY TWENTY PACES BACK AND DON'T *SAY* OR *DO* ANYTHING. GOT IT?

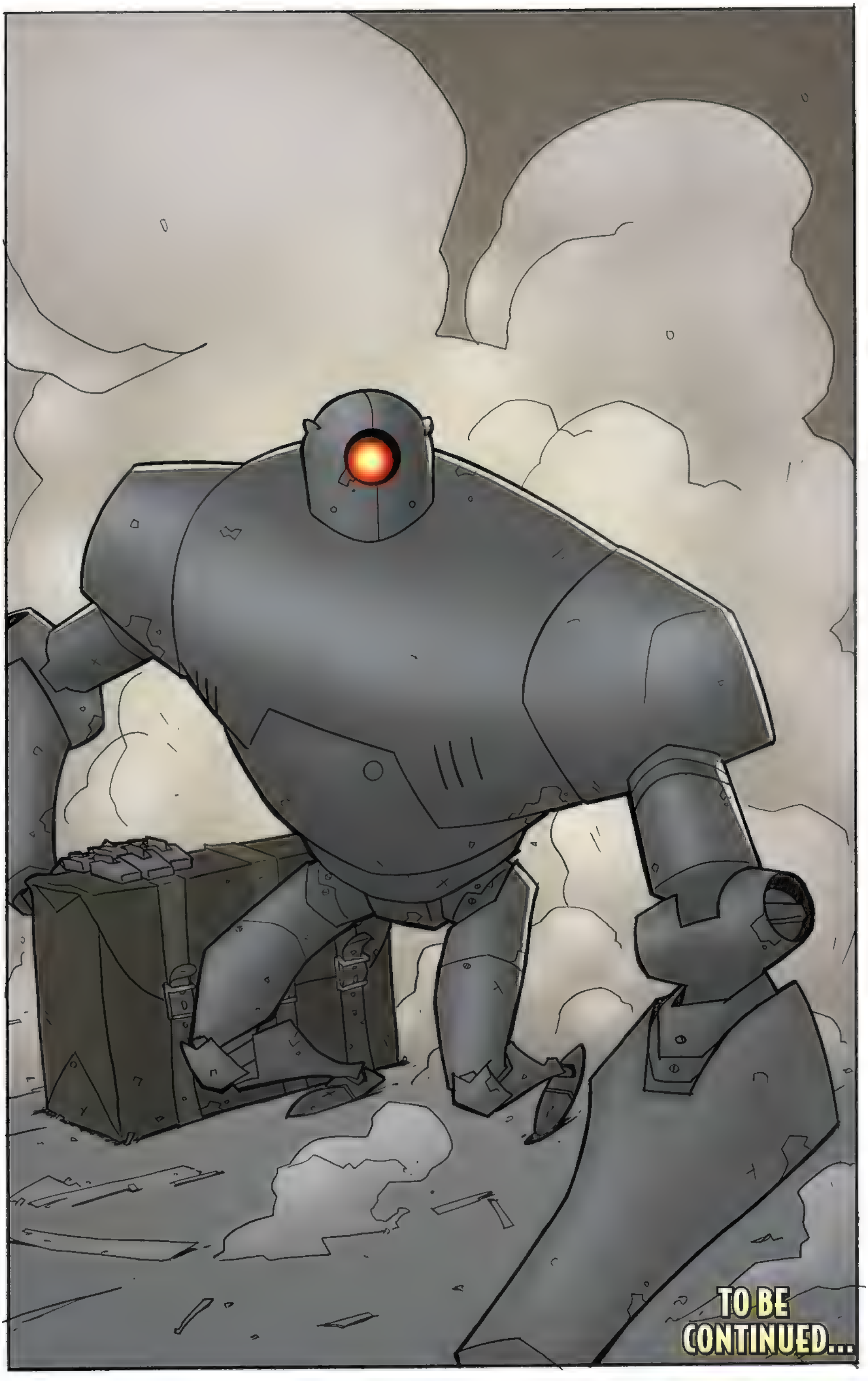
ROGER.

GONNA BE THE *DEATH* OF ME...

CRASH

KROOOM

HORSEFEATHERS...


TO BE
CONTINUED...

The Deadly Art of Science
Chapter 3
Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang

THE NEXT MORNING...

WELL, I DIDN'T KNOW THERE'D BE A GIANT ROBOT!

YOUR POINT IS I SHOULDN'T EVER LEAVE THE BUILDING!

THAT'S EXACTLY MY POINT.

ROBO, WE HAVE HAD THIS CONVERSATION TOO MANY TIMES.

THE PREVIOUS NIGHT...

YER TELLIN' ME.

I WILL NOT TOLERATE SASS.

YOU BUILT ME THIS WAY.

I BUILT YOU TO BE YOU. BUT I EXPECT YOU TO POSSESS SELF-PRESERVATION ENOUGH NOT TO RUN OFF AND GET YOURSELF KIDNAPPED AND DESTROYED!

WELL, THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN, SO OBVIOUSLY I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.

OH, I CAN SEE THAT.

THIS ISN'T ABOUT MY SAFETY.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SHOVED ME INTO AN ALTERNATIVE UNIVERSE FILLED WITH MONSTERS! YOU DON'T GET TO FLIP YOUR LID IF I WANNA TAKE A WALK DOWN THE BLOCK!

PRECAUTIONS WERE TAKEN.

YOU PUT ME IN A DIVER'S SUIT!

AND YOU RETURNED SAFELY.

IT WAS TORN TO SHREDS!

IT SERVED ITS PURPOSE.

IS THAT WHY YOU WANNA KEEP ME LOCKED UP IN HERE?

WHAT ARE YOU IMPLYING?

I'M NOT "SERVING MY PURPOSE" IF I'M OUT THERE BEING MYSELF!

ROBO, I DON'T-- WHERE ARE YOU--ROBO, I FORBID YOU FROM LEAVING!

YEAH? GOOD LUCK WITH THAT.

SOON...

GOOD NEWS!

I CAN WORK WITH YOU GUYS ALL THE TIME NOW!

NO.

YEAH! ISN'T IT GREAT?

NO, NO, NO.

WHAT? WHY NOT? I WAS SWELL!

I ALMOST GOT 'IM, MR. TAROT!

AHH!

YOU NEARLY GOT ME *KILLED!*

AND I NEARLY SAVED YOUR LIFE! KINDA BALANCES OUT.

I *KNEW* IT WASN'T AS TERRIBLE AS YOU WERE *SAYING,* DAD.

AHH!

IT WAS *WORSE!*

BKAM BKAM BKAM

I'M HELPING!

WHY DO YOU HAVE A *GUN?!*

GET HIM *OUT OF HERE!*

OH, DON'T PAY ATTENTION TO HIM. IT'S THIS CASE. WE HAVEN'T HAD A SOLID LEAD IN *AGES.* GIVES HIM THE GRUMPS.

I'D RATHER WORK WITH A *GORILLA!*

SEE?

WAS HE FOLLOWED HERE? HELEN? ASK HIM IF HE WAS *FOLLOWED!*

=TSK= AS IF HE'D HAVE *ANY* IDEA.

YOU'D THINK AFTER ALL THAT *ZEN TEMPLE* STUFF HE'D BE LESS *CRANKY* ABOUT THESE THINGS.

ZEN TEMPLE?

OH, *SURE.* SPOILED SON OF AN INDUSTRIALIST, MISSPENT YOUTH IN THE FAR EAST, PLANE WRECK, SAVED BY MONKS, ADAPTED THEIR ZEN ARCHERY TO GUNS, RETURNED TO CIVILIZATION, INHERITED GRANDPA'S MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR COMPANY, BECAME BUSINESSMAN BY DAY AND A *CRIME-FIGHTER* BY NIGHT.

GOLLY!

PRETTY STANDARD STORY, REALLY.

THINK HE'LL TEACH ME SOME OF THAT?

PROBABLY NOT. HE WON'T EVEN LET ME PICK UP A GUN.

ME NEITHER.

I JUST...I NEED TO DO SOMETHING TO CONVINCE HIM TO TRAIN ME!

HOPE YOU HAVE BETTER LUCK THAN I HAVE.

AFTER LETTING THAT ROBOT GET AWAY WITH THE ANALYTICAL COMPUTER? I DOUBT IT.

WHAT DID YOU SAY--WHAT DID IT TAKE?

ANALYTICAL COMPUTER?

YOU'RE SURE? HOW DO YOU KNOW?

I THINK I'VE BEEN AROUND ENOUGH ACTION SCIENCE LAB EQUIPMENT TO KNOW AN ANALYTICAL COMPUTER WHEN I SEE ONE.

TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT CRYSTAL SKULLS.

AND HERE?

IF IT'S FROM WESTERN ELECTRIC AND THEY WON'T PUBLICLY **ADMIT** WHAT WAS STOLEN, IT'S **GOT** TO BE ONE OF--HECK, MAYBE **ALL** OF THEIR NEW PROTOTYPE ELECTRON GUNS.

GUNS?

IT'S NOT FLASH GORDON, JUST EXPERIMENTAL AND **EXPENSIVE.** CATHODE RAY STUFF.

OKAY, BUT WHAT DO YOU ***BUILD*** WITH ALL THIS?

AND WHERE DOES A ***FAKE*** CRYSTAL SKULL FIT INTO IT?

I'M NOT CONVINCED THE SKULL HEIST IS RELATED. IT'S ***TOO*** STRANGE.

SO, WHAT, GANGSTERS ***SUDDENLY*** HIJACKING TOP SECRET SUPER SCIENCE STUFF IS ONLY ***SLIGHTLY*** STRANGE?

I'M WITH HELEN ON THIS ONE. IT ***CAN'T*** BE A COINCIDENCE GANGSTERS STOLE WEIRD SCIENCE DOODADS ***AND*** A WEIRD SKULL.

THANK YOU, ROBO.

I...I, UH. WELL... I.

HEY, CHAMP, TIME FOR THAT ***TRAINING!***

WE'VE BEEN HERE FOR **HOURS.** WHEN DO WE GET TO THE **SHOOTIN'** PART?

VIGILANTISM ISN'T JUST SHOOTING CROOKS. CONSIDER THE **ROOT WORD.** VIGIL.

WE **KNOW** THERE'S BAD GUYS IN THERE, SO WHY DON'T YOU GO IN ALL KUNG FU GUN SHOOTIN'?

BECAUSE I WANT TO **LIVE?**

USE YOUR MYSTIC SIGHT TO SHOOT 'EM ALL FROM OUTSIDE!

THAT'S NOT HOW ZEN MARKSMANSHIP WORKS.

SO YOU **KICK IN** THE DOOR AND SHOOT THE **GUNS** OUTTA THEIR **HANDS** BEFORE THEY KNOW **WHAT'S** WHAT!

HOW MANY ABSURD IDEAS ABOUT ME DID HELEN MANAGE TO **GIVE** YOU IN **ONE** AFTERNOON?

DIRK DARING, THE DARING DIRK OF DERRING-DO, NEVER SAT ON A ROOF SIPPING COLD COFFEE, I CAN TELL YA THAT.

CRIME-FIGHTING IS A **LITTLE** MORE COMPLEX THAN YOUR ADVENTURE MAGAZINES LET ON.

I COULD GO IN THERE AND SHOOT 'EM UP. I'M BULLETPROOF, Y'KNOW!

YOU EVER SHOOT A GUN BEFORE?

I SHOT THAT BIG ROBOT!

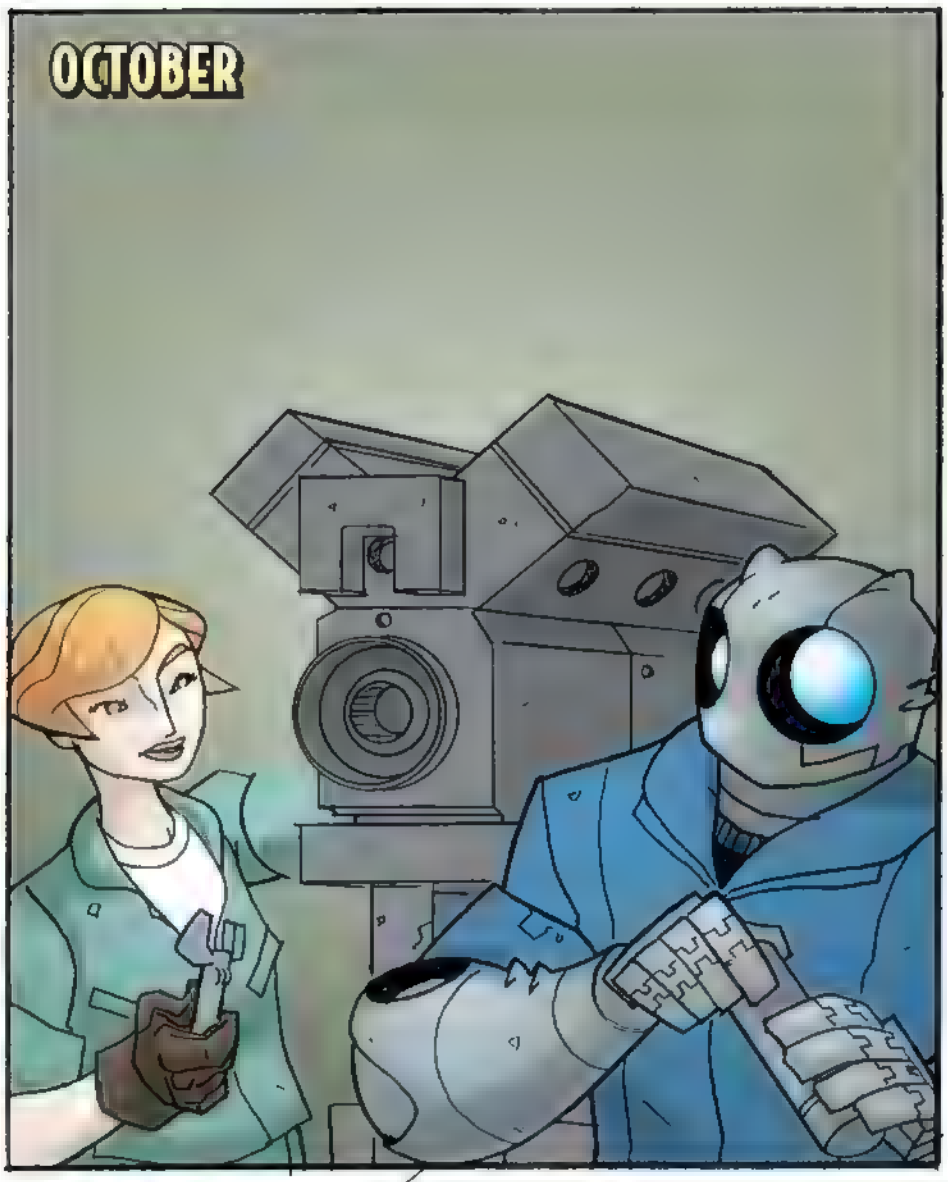
I CAN'T COUNT HOW MANY WAYS THAT'S A "NO."

LIGHTNING GUNS! I SHOOT THOSE ALL THE TIME. SOMETIMES THEY DON'T EVEN **EXPLODE.**

H'OKAY...

MEANWHILE...

MMHMM.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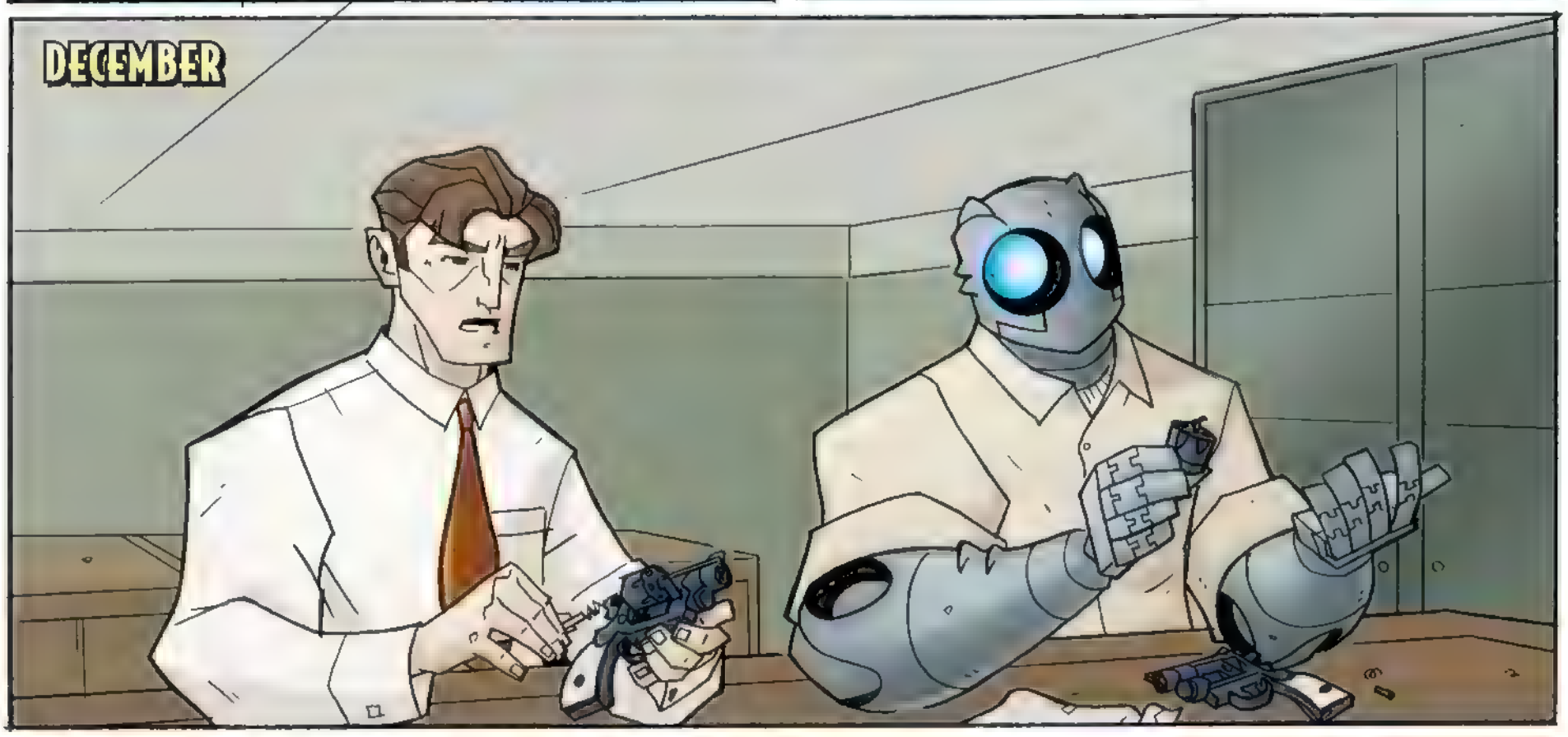
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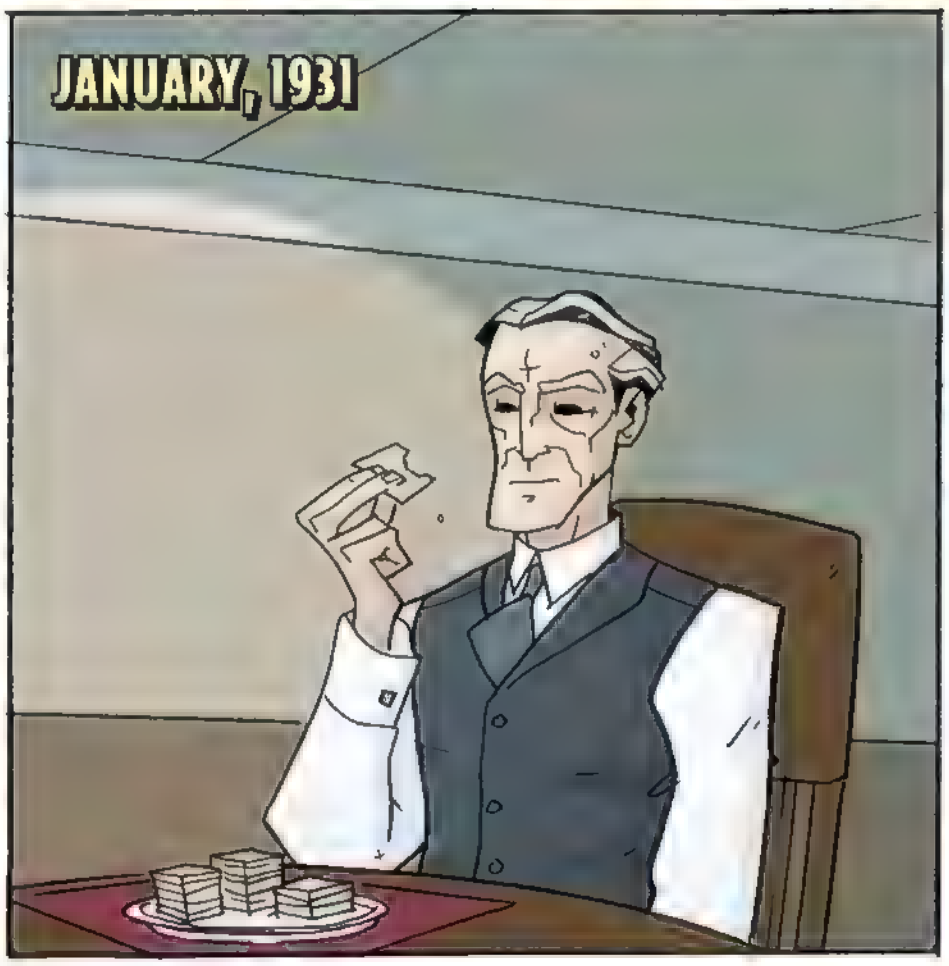
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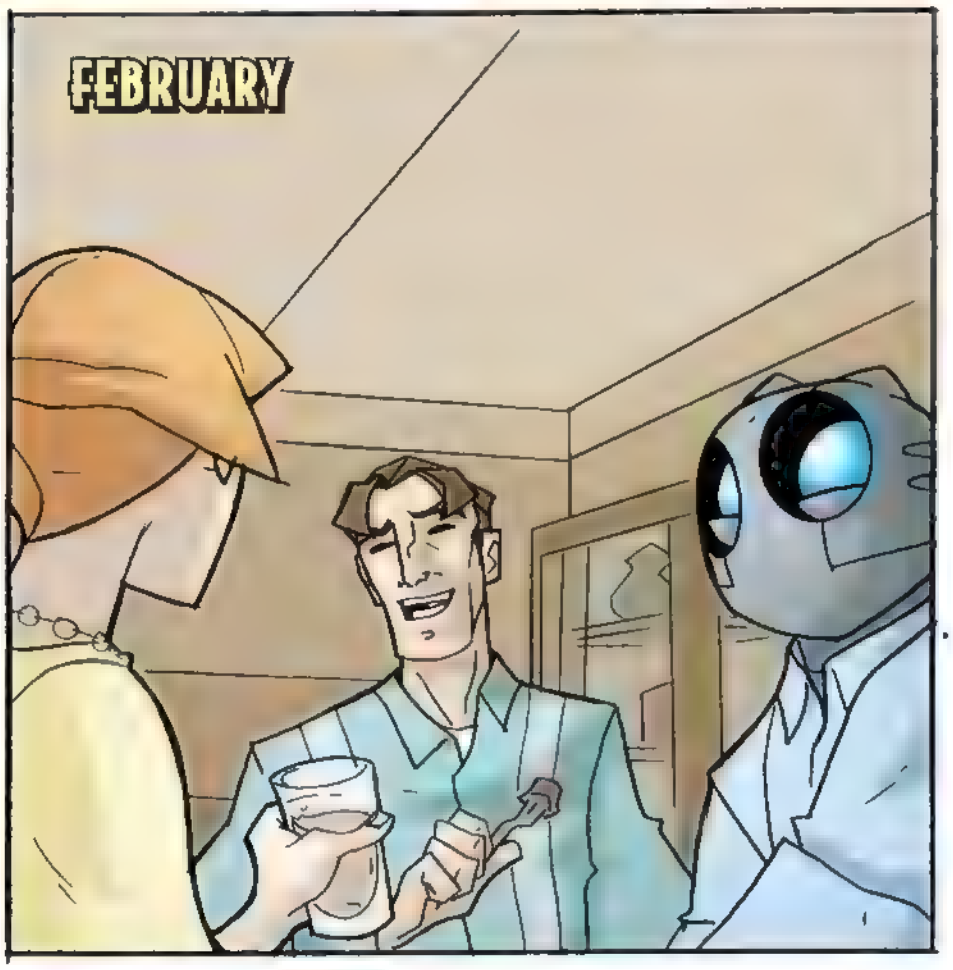

FEBRUARY

MARCH

Y'HAD ME CLEANIN' GUNS FOR A **MONTH** AND NOW **THIS?** WHAT GIVES!

YOU WANT TO LEARN TO SHOOT OR NOT?

WHAT'S TO LEARN? POINT AND **BANG!**

AND YET YOU'RE ***TERRIBLE*** AT IT.

CONTROL YOUR BREATHING AND STILL YOUR MIND.

I **DON'T** BREATHE AND I CAN'T **STOP** THINKING.

THE ***GOAL*** IS TO ENTER A MEDITATIVE STATE. A ONENESS, HOWEVER ***BRIEF,*** WITH ALL THINGS

THE TARGET IS THE BOW IS THE ARROW IS YOU IS THE UNIVERSE. IT'S ***IMPOSSIBLE*** TO MISS WITH THIS TECHNIQUE.

AND THAT'S HOW **YOU** SHOOT?

NO, I USE THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE AND A LOT OF QUICK MATH.

THE MUMBO JUMBO IS TO KEEP YOU FROM ***OVER-THINKING*** YOUR SHOTS. WHEN YOU POINT AT SOMETHING, YOU'LL GO CENTER MASS EVERY TIME WITHOUT THINKING.

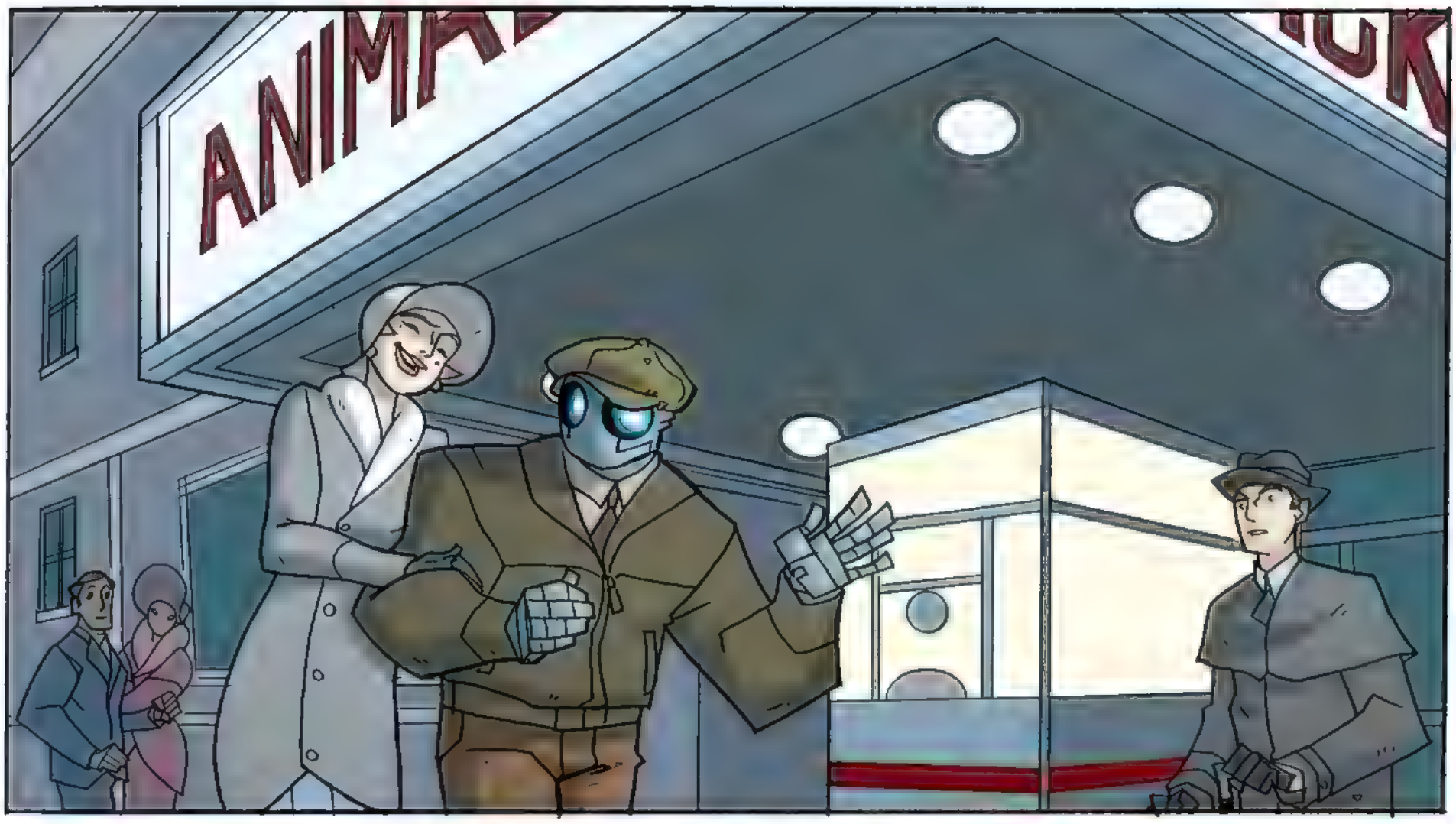
IT'S GOOD FOR POINTING, BUT BULLETS HAVE TO WORK AGAINST GRAVITY, DRAG, WIND, HUMIDITY, TEMPERATURE, YOUR MOTION RELATIVE TO THE TARGET'S MOTION. YOU HAVE TO AIM SOMEWHERE ***OTHER THAN*** WHAT IT IS YOU'RE AIMING ***FOR.***

THE KEY IS TO ***INTERNALIZE*** THE VARIABLES AND POINT YOUR WEAPON THERE WITHOUT THINKING ABOUT IT.

LIKE THIS.

BKAM

PAF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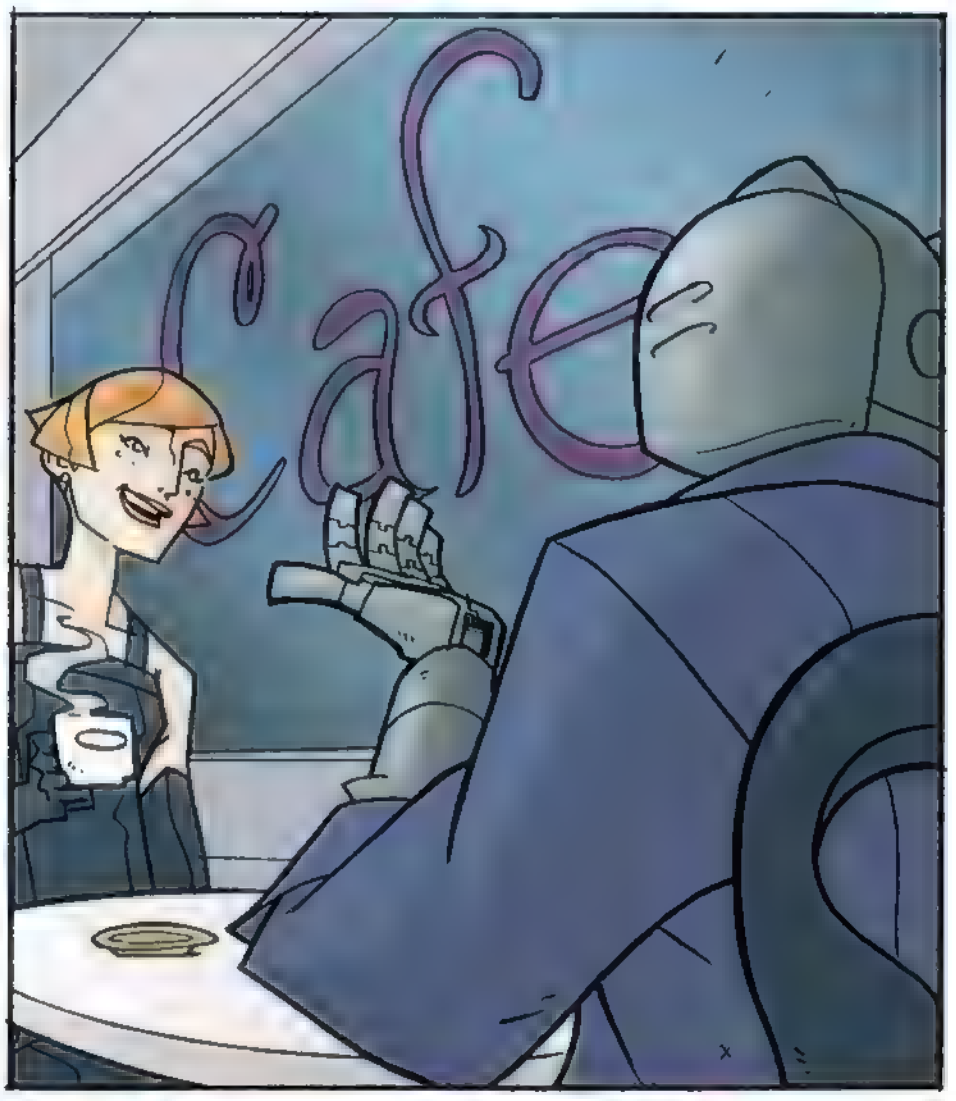

CAFE

NEVER MET A GIRL WHO COULD HANDLE A CARBURETOR LIKE THAT.

I NEVER MET A ROBOT, UH, ***AT ALL.***

Y'GOT ME THERE. GUESS WE'RE EVEN!

BUT I ALWAYS HAD A KNACK FOR GADGETS AND GIZMOS. EVERYTHING IN ***JACK TAROT'S ARSENAL*** IS A DOODAD I MADE OR TINKERED WITH.

EVERYTHING?

FROM THE AMMO TO OUR ENCRYPTED WIRELESS. ***AND*** THE WIRETAPS AND RECORDERS, THANK YOU VERY MUCH. YOU NAME IT, I MADE IT OR MADE IT ***BETTER.*** BACKBONE OF THIS ***WHOLE OPERATION,*** I TELL YA.

WHICH IS WHY HE SAYS I HAVE TO STAY ***BEHIND*** ALL THE TIME.

HEH.

WHAT?

YOU'RE IN THE FAMILY BUSINESS, BUT THE THINGS THAT MAKE YOU SO ***GOOD*** AT IT ARE THE ***SAME*** THINGS THAT HOLD YOU ***BACK.*** IT'S JUST LIKE ME.

HADN'T THOUGHT OF IT LIKE THAT.

BUT YOU DO ALL THIS FOR HIM ANYWAY?

WELL, YEAH. HE'S MY ***DAD.*** I LOVE HIM.

NEED A HAND?

PLEASE.

GOT IT?

UH...UM, YUH.

BUT YOU DIDN'T. UH. YOU DIDN'T **GET** ANYTHING.

JUST SHUT UP.

THAT... WAS, UH.

YEAH.

I THOUGHT YOU'D BE *COLD.*

MR. TESLA DESIGNED ME TO DISSIPATE WASTE HEAT THROUGHOUT MY FRAME TO APPROXIMATE HUMAN BODY TEMPERATURE.

THAT'S THE *LEAST* ROMANTIC THING I'VE EVER HEARD.

YEAH.

BUT IT WASN'T BAD. THE KISSING.

IT WASN'T?

WAS IT?

NO! I MEANT--I NEVER-- Y'KNOW...

WE NEED TO--I SHOULD GO.

OH.

IT'S TIME FOR DINNER AND--I MEAN, SO DAD DOESN'T, UH, *SHOOT YOU.*

DINNER, HUH?

LATER...

CURIOUS. THE PHENOMENON GIVES OFF AN ***OLFACTORY*** REACTION NOT UNLIKE... ***VEGETABLE SOUP?***

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?

*IT'S FOR YOU. TO **EAT?***

YOU'RE FREE TO WASTE YOUR ***OWN*** TIME, ROBO, BUT I WON'T HAVE YOU WASTING ***MINE.***

*MR. TESLA, YOU **HAVE** TO EAT.*

NOT SO MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE YOU LEFT THAT YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE THE ***CRACKERS*** ARE KEPT.

*YOU'RE **NOT** EATING JUST **CRACKERS** ANYMORE.*

DON'T BE RIDICULOUS. I ***HAVE*** TO CALCULATE THE CUBIC VOLUME OF ANYTHING BEFORE EATING IT. ONLY ***CRACKERS*** WILL DO, THANK YOU.

*THE BOWL IS A **HEMISPHERE** WITH A FOUR-INCH DIAMETER. ALL THE VEGETABLES ARE A QUARTER OF AN INCH **CUBED**. THERE'S **EXACTLY** NINE OF THEM BECAUSE YOU LIKE MULTIPLES OF THREE.*

[(2/3π 2in^3] -(π 2in^2 x1/2) (1/4in^3 x9)

*I EVEN LEFT OUT **EXACTLY** HALF AN INCH AROUND THE LIP FOR EASIER CALCULATION. IT'S ALL IN THE NOTES.*

WHY DID YOU COME BACK?

PEOPLE NEED MORE THAN CRACKERS. I JUST...I WANT WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU.

THAT'S ALL I'VE WANTED FOR YOU

YEAH. I KNOW. I'M SORRY.

IT'S TEN POINT THREE-FOUR-TWO CUBIC INCHES OF SOUP.

YOU STAYED BUSY. MORE **ELECTRO-SCOPE** STUFF?

HM? OH, NO. **OLDER** IDEAS I'M PURSUING TO FREE MY **SUBCONSCIOUS** TO TOIL ON THE ELECTROSCOPE.

ANY PROGRESS?

GENIUS IS TRANSFORMATIVE BUT **UNPREDICT-ABLE.** A SOLUTION WILL PRESENT ITSELF WHEN IT IS READY.

YOU? IT'S BEEN MONTHS BUT I HAVEN'T HEARD OF **ANY** SCIENTIFIC MAYHEM SINCE YOU LEFT. AND THE TABLOIDS ONLY REPORT YOUR ASSOCIATION WITH THIS MISS **MCALLISTER.**

SINCE WHEN DO **YOU** READ RAGS LIKE THAT?

SINCE MY CELEBRITY ROBOT DASHED INTO A CRUEL AND DANGEROUS WORLD.

WELL, DON'T **WORRY.** I'M BEING **TRAINED** TO TAKE CARE OF MYSELF.

PROMISE ME THERE WILL BE **MORE** TO YOUR LIFE THAN ALL THIS **COWBOY** NONSENSE.

MR. TESLA, I--

PROMISE ME.

WELL, YEAH. **YEAH,** OF COURSE. I'LL HAVE MY OWN LAB AND EVERYTHING. **YOU'LL** SEE.

GOOD. NOW, ABOUT THIS MISS MCALLISTER OF YOURS...

MR. TESLA.

SHE COMES FROM A GOOD FAMILY, I SEE. **HEIRESS** TO AN IMPORTING-EXPORTING CONCERN.

PLEASE STOP.

I THINK IT MAY BE TIME WE HAD...A **TALK.**

WHAT TALK?

ROBO. WHEN A **MANBOT** LOVES A **WOMAN...**

STOP, STOP, STOP, **STOP!**

I THINK I SHOULD MEET HER **FATHER.**

MR. TESLAAAA!

MEANWHILE...

AND TO WHAT DO I OWE THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY?

IS IT SO ***UNUSUAL*** FOR A HUSBAND TO ENJOY A WONDERFUL MEAL WITH HIS ***BEAUTIFUL*** WIFE?

FOR A ***HUSBAND?*** NO. FOR ***YOU,*** THOMAS, IN THE MIDST OF ONE OF YOUR GREAT SCIENTIFIC ADVENTURES, ***YES.***

AS IT SO HAPPENS, MY DEAREST, TONIGHT'S MEAL IS TO CELEBRATE THE ***CULMINATION*** OF MY LATEST EFFORTS.

OH? WHICH EFFORTS? THE ELECTRIC TRAINS?

NO, NOT THE TRAINS.

WELL, IF IT MEANS WE'LL SPEND MORE TIME LIKE ***THIS,*** THEN IT DOESN'T MATTER.

WE'LL MAKE UP FOR ALL THE TIME I LOST TO MY WORK. ALL THE TIME I COULD NOT DEVOTE TO YOU. MINA, WE WILL HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE ***WORLD.***

The Deadly Art of Science
Chapter 4
The Wizard of Menlo Park

MENLO PARK

TIME IS OF THE ***ESSENCE,*** LAD.

YES, I KNOW.

I BUILT THE GREATEST SCIENTIFIC EMPIRE IN THE HISTORY OF ***MANKIND.*** ALL THAT ***SACRIFICE*** FOR ALL THOSE ***YEARS.*** FOR ***THIS.*** DILLY-DALLYING WILL NOT BE ***TOLERATED.***

THE DELAYS OF LATE COULDN'T BE ***AVOIDED,*** FATHER.

HOGWASH.

THE, AH, "EXTRA-LEGAL" STAFF BROUGHT SOME ***COMPLICATIONS*** TO THE WORK.

THERE ARE NO RULES HERE. WE'RE TRYING TO ***ACCOMPLISH*** SOMETHING.

OF COURSE. BUT THESE MOBSTERS APPROACH THEIR TASKS WITH ALL THE SUBTLETY OF A STICK OF DYNAMITE. IN SOME CASES ***LITERALLY.*** AND NOW THIS MASKED VIGILANTE...

REGULAR CHANNELS WOULD'VE TAKEN TOO LONG. WE'D BE ***YEARS*** AWAY FROM WHERE WE STAND NOW. AND WHERE WE STAND NOW IS WHERE WE ***SHOULD'VE*** BEEN ***MONTHS*** AGO!

YOU AREN'T ***STILL*** WORKING ON MY DYNAMIC ELECTRO-CONSCIOUSNESS ENGINE ARE YOU?

NOSSIR, MR. EDISON! REPAIRS ARE COMPLETE. WE'RE WRAPPING UP FINAL DIAGNOSTICS NOW.

GOOD, GOOD. TODAY'S LABOR BEARS TOMORROW'S FRUIT.

WE BEGAN INITIAL TESTS OF THE COLLECTION NETWORK TODAY. ***EVERYONE*** HAS BEEN WORKING DOUBLE SHIFTS TO STAY ON SCHEDULE.

ON SCHEDULE IS ***BEHIND*** SCHEDULE, M'BOY.

WE'RE IN THE FINAL STAGE. UNLESS YOU CAN INVENT A LONGER DAY, I'M AFRAID "ON SCHEDULE" WILL HAVE TO BE "AHEAD OF SCHEDULE" **ENOUGH.**

BAH!

VERY MATURE.

THAT'S NO WAY FOR A POOPYFACE TO SPEAK TO HIS FATHER.

PFSHHHHH

THE SKULL IS A **FASCINATING** SAMPLE. IT'S...I'M NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND THE TOTALITY OF OUR FINDINGS, MR. EDISON.

YES, THAT IS ITS NATURE. WHAT OF THE CALCULATIONS?

THE ANALYTICAL COMPUTER WILL BE DONE WITHIN THE HOUR, BUT ALL EVIDENCE POINTS TO THE RESULTS FALLING **WELL** WITHIN YOUR SPECIFIED PARAMETERS, MR. EDISON.

FINE, FINE. THAT'S FINE WORK, GUSMAN. AND HOW ARE YOUR LITTLE ONES THESE DAYS?

MISSING THEIR DADDY, I'M SORRY TO SAY, SIR.

I KNOW THAT TOO WELL. **TOO** WELL. BUT OUR GREAT WORK IS NEARLY CONCLUDED. AND **THEN** WE SHALL GAIN BACK ALL THE TIME WE EVER SACRIFICED.

ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD.

ONE FINAL ACQUISITION TONIGHT. THE **DE-CE** WILL BE FULLY CHARGED.

I'M GOING TO BE A **PILL** UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE ITEM IS IN OUR POSSESSION, YOU UNDERSTAND.

I HAVE EVERY CONFIDENCE THIS IS SO.

ENDLESS WORK CAN DRIVE A MAN MAD. MADDER STILL WHEN HE KNOWS NAUGHT BUT A PIECE OF THE WHOLE. WHAT YOU LADS TOIL UPON NOW IS A GIFT TO ALL HUMANITY. IT WILL BE REPAID TO YOU A THOUSANDFOLD.

MEANWHILE...

YOU WANTED TO SEE ME?

YES, ROBO. PLEASE, COME IN.

YOU KNOW I DO NOT APPROVE OF THIS ***GALLIVANTING*** YOU'VE TAKEN UP.

YES, SIR.

I DIDN'T ***BUILD*** YOU FOR GALLIVANTING.

NO, SIR.

BUT. I SUPPOSE IT WAS ***INEVITABLE*** YOU WOULD SEEK ADVENTURE. THE GEAR DOESN'T FALL FAR FROM THE CLOCKMAKER.

MR. TESLA, NO OFFENSE, BUT ***YOUR*** IDEA OF ADVENTURE NEVER TAKES YOU ***OUTSIDE.***

HRM.

AND YOU SAY THIS JACK TAROT IS ***TRAINING*** YOU.

HE'S THE ***TOPS,*** MR. TESLA! HE TAUGHT ME TO SHOOT GUNS ***JUST LIKE*** A ZEN MONK AND EVERYTHING!

WELL, I DON'T THINK THAT'S ***EXACTLY*** WHAT HE DID.

REGARDLESS.

YOU... YOU HAVE MY BLESSING.

REALLY!

BUT I ***WILL*** WORRY.

NOT **TOO** MUCH, I HOPE. YOU MADE ME SUPER STRONG AND SUPER TOUGH AFTER ALL.

YES, BUT THE LAST TIME WE SPOKE WAS AFTER YOU WRESTLED A ROBOT TWICE YOUR SIZE AND **LOST.**

TOSSED ME AROUND LIKE A **RAG DOLL.**

MY POINT **PRECISELY.** YOU CAN'T **ALWAYS** RELY ON YOUR PHYSICAL QUALITIES. DON'T FORGET TO **THINK** EVERY NOW AND THEN.

OH?

I **HAVE** BEEN. WE'VE HIT A REAL STUMPER.

MR. JACK CHASED THESE SCIENCE CRIMES ALL THE WAY FROM CHICAGO AND HE'S NO CLOSER TO CRACKING THE CASE THAN WHEN HE STARTED **MONTHS** AGO.

VEXING INDEED. COMMON ELEMENTS?

THAT'S JUST IT! THERE **AREN'T** ANY. THERE'S GANGSTERS, EXPERIMENTAL VACUUM TUBES, THAT MONSTER-BOT, A COMPUTER PROTOTYPE, MAYBE A MAGICAL SKULL, A BUNCH OF OTHER STUFF, AND IT DOESN'T ADD UP!

THERE ARE PERHAPS SIX PEOPLE IN THE WORLD WITH THE MEANS AND ABILITY TO BUILD THIS OTHER ROBOT. MYSELF INCLUDED.

FURTHER, **PRODUCING** THE ROBOT IS PROOF OF CLEVERNESS AND RESOURCES ENOUGH TO QUIETLY DEVELOP THE VERY TECHNOLOGIES THEY'RE TAKING **GREAT** RISKS TO STEAL.

VERY CURIOUS.

EXCEPT THE SKULL.

HM? YES. THE SKULL IS ANOTHER WRINKLE ALTOGETHER.

IF A GENIUS LIKE **YOU** CAN'T PUT IT ALL TOGETHER, I DON'T KNOW WHAT CHANCE THE REST OF US HAVE.

GENIUS IS OFTEN LITTLE MORE THAN THE ABILITY TO SEE CONNECTIONS NO ONE ELSE CAN.

1886 METRO N Y

SOUNDS LIKE *INSANITY.*

I WON'T DENY THERE ARE A FEW ***SUPERFICIAL*** SIMILARITIES.

A "FEW" HUH?

SARCASM IS NOT AN ENDEARING QUALITY, ROBO.

I'LL ***TRY*** TO KEEP THAT IN MIND.

YOU'RE DOING IT ***AGAIN*** AREN'T YOU!

YES. BUT I'M TAKING THE ACT ON THE ROAD. GOTTA GET IN SOME MORE TRAINING WITH MR. JACK BEFORE TONIGHT'S MISSION.

BE CAREFUL.

AND DON'T FORGET YOUR COAT!

JEEZ.

CRRRAK

HEY, HEY.

STOP USING THE SECRET ENTRANCE!

ARGH! IF ANYONE NEEDS ME, TOO BAD.

WHAT'S UP HIS EXHAUST?

IT'S THIS CASE. BACK HOME, IT WAS ALWAYS MOBSTERS THIS, POLITICIANS THAT, AND THEN SOMETIMES THEY'D BE IN CAHOOTS.

USUALLY IN CAHOOTS, REALLY.

ANYWAY, YOU ROUGH UP SOME MOOKS, FOLLOW THE MONEY, DO SOME SHOOTOUTS, AND EVERYTHING WRAPS UP NEATLY.

NOT SO WITH THIS ONE.

MR. TESLA DIDN'T HAVE ANY IDEAS EITHER.

GUESS IT'S UP TO US THEN.

LATER...

HAROLD LLOYD

in

'FEET FIR

HE'S STILL FIRING ON ALL SIXES!

I DIDN'T PEG YOU FOR A HAROLD LLOYD KINDA GAL.

OH, SURE. I'VE SEEN ALL HIS PICTURES EVER SINCE "SAFETY LAST."

NEVER GOT TO SEE THAT ONE.

OH, YOU SHOULD HAVE! IT'S THE BEE'S KNEES.

I WASN'T BORN YET.

THAT. THAT WAS EIGHT YEARS AGO.

UH, WELL--

YOU'RE EIGHT YEARS OLD?

SEVEN. ACTUALLY.

OH.

OHHH, I THINK I'M GOING TO BE SICK.

THIS CAN'T BE A SURPRISE. I WAS IN ALL THE PAPERS.

I KNOW. BUT I HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT IT BEFORE.

SEVEN?

INTELLECTUALLY I'M TWENTY TO TWENTY-FIVE. IT'S NOT THAT BAD.

I NEED... I THINK WHAT I NEED IS A DRINK.

AND WHAT'D GOING TO THE MOVIES HAVE TO DO WITH SOLVING THIS CASE ANYWAY?

WELL. SOMETIMES IT HELPS TO STEP AWAY FROM A PROBLEM.

SEVEN.

AND SOMETIMES YOU REALIZE YOUR ROBOT BOYFRIEND IS EIGHT YEARS OLD.

BUT, HEY! NOW "ROBOT" ISN'T THE WEIRDEST PART OF OUR RELATIONSHIP.

YOU'RE NOT HELPING.

YEAH, SORRY.

?!

WEEOOO WEEOOO

VROOOOOOM

PHONE

DAD? IT'S ANOTHER ROBBERY!

YES, A *SCIENCE* ROBBERY.

HE'S... WELL, HE WENT AHEAD.

WEEOOO WEEOOO

OF COURSE HE DID. I'LL BE THERE ASAP. KEEP ME POSTED ON THE MOBILE!

WELL, ACTUALLY...

"...WE *TOOK* THE CAR."

TO SEE A MOVIE, BUT--

A MOVIE IS *NOT* A DATE!

NECESSARILY.

WHAT'S ALL THE HUBBUB?

SCREEEECH

THERE!

GRRRRANK

IS THAT--?

THE ROBOT! CALL YOUR DAD.

WHERE'RE YOU GOING!

ROUND TWO!

HEY, GET BACK HERE!

NOTHING DOIN', SQUIRREL.

WONDER IF I CAN JUMP THAT HIGH...

APPLESAUCE.

KRONCH

S'GETTIN' AWAY!

CALL FOR BACK UP!

SCRATCH THAT, CALL THE ARMY!

BKAM BKAM

BLAM BLAM

BLAM BLAM

THANKS!

HEY, WAIT! Y'CAN'T--!

BANANA OIL, THAT BRUTE CAN MOVE!

NYC

BKOW

SPANG

HA! TAKE THAT!

CREEEK

UH.

FIVE MINUTES LATER...

HERE, PUT YOUR--

I GOT IT. YEAH, OKAY. *PULL!*

HRRRNG!

I SHOT IT!

YEAH, WELL, OFFICIALLY ***JONES*** HERE SHOT IT SO WE DON'T HAVE TO ARREST YOU ON ACCOUNT'A THAT GUN YOU ***DIDN'T*** SWIPE.

NICE SHOOTING, JONES.

WE GOT MEN ON ITS TAIL. THING'S LEAKIN' LIKE A STUCK PIG.

SERGEANT! THE TRAIL JUST ***STOPS!***

I DON'T GET IT. THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY IN OR OUT, AND WE HAD THAT ***BLOCKED.***

END OF THE TRAIL.

ER, WELL, OFFICER, I GUESS THIS IS WHERE CIVILIANS GET OUT OF THE WAY SO YOU CAN CONDUCT YOUR INVESTIGATIONS.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I THINK DAD'LL WANT TO HEAR ABOUT THIS.

LATER...

--COULD HAVE *DONE* SOMETHING!

LIKE *WHAT?*

GOTTEN THERE, FOR STARTERS.

THEN?

NOT LET THE DAMNED THING GET *AWAY,* I'LL TELL YOU THAT!

AND HOW'S *THAT* EXACTLY? ROBO RUNS LIKE A *RACE HORSE* AND *HE* COULDN'T KEEP UP.

BAH!

BAH, BAH *BLACK SHEEP.* I DUNNO WHAT YOU'RE *GROUSING* ABOUT ANYWAY. IF WE HADN'T GONE OUT, WE'D NEVER'VE RUN INTO THE STUPID THING. IT'S PURE *LUCK* WE HAPPENED TO BE THERE AT ALL!

NO, I KNOW. THIS BUSINESS WITH THE ROBOTS AND COMPUTERS AND RAY GUNS AND...EVERYTHING ABOUT IT SLIPPING THROUGH MY FINGERS.

HOLD THE PHONE...

1886
METRO N.Y.

GENIUS IS OFTEN LITTLE MORE THAN THE ABILITY TO SEE CONNECTIONS NO ONE ELSE CAN.

PNEUMATIC TUBES!

COME AGAIN?

THERE'S A MAP OF THE CITY'S SECRET **PNEUMATIC TUBE** NETWORK IN MR. TESLA'S OFFICE! ALL THE ROBBERIES **YOU** MAPPED OUT **HERE** ARE RIGHT NEXT TO THEM!

THERE **IS** NO PNEUMATIC TUBE NETWORK.

I TOLD YA, IT'S **SECRET.** WASN'T BUILT TO CODE OR SOMETHING. MR. TESLA AND HIS FRIENDS HAD IT SHUT DOWN FIFTY YEARS AGO. NO ONE EVER USES IT.

YOU'RE SURE ABOUT THESE LOCATIONS?

I'VE SEEN THAT MAP A **HUNDRED** TIMES. WHILE DUSTING.

BUT YEAH! IT'S TOO BIG A COINCIDENCE! HOW **ELSE** COULD THAT HUGE ROBOT GET AROUND WITHOUT BEING SEEN?

THIS IS THE CLOSEST THING WE'VE HAD TO A BREAK IN **AGES.**

THIS ROBBERY HERE. AT 77TH AND FIRST. THERE'S A PNEUMATIC STATION JUST A COUPLE BLOCKS AWAY!

WE'VE ACTED ON **FLIMSIER** CLUES. HELEN. PREP THE CAR.

AND SO...

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

WITH YOU.

HELEN, DEAR. IF YOU'RE THERE, THEN THE MISSION STOPS BEING MY PRIORITY.

TSK. I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF, DAD.

I KNOW THAT. YOU'VE ***BEEN*** TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF SINCE YOUR MOTHER PASSED AWAY. YOU'RE THE ***BRAINS*** OF THIS OPERATION. BUT I'M STILL YOUR FATHER AND I CAN'T HELP THAT I ***WILL*** ABANDON EVERYTHING IF YOU'RE IN THE SLIGHTEST DANGER DOWN THERE.

STAY IN THE CAR?

YOU TOO.

HOW'S THAT?

I DON'T NEED YOUR LIGHT-UP EYES GIVING US AWAY.

WHAT IF I KEEP 'EM CLOSED?

I'M A GOOD SHOT NOW.

THAT'S ***MINE!*** WHERE DID YOU--!

GIVE ME THAT!

DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ANYONE'S BEEN HERE SINCE GOD WAS A BOY.

HOLD ON.

KTUNK

UM.

PFSHHHH

PFSHHHH

KTUNKA-
KTUNKA-
KTUNKA

IF YOU'RE STILL RECEIVING ME, I THINK IT'S SAFE TO SAY ROBO WAS RIGHT.

KTUNKA-
KTUNKA-
KTUNKA

YOU'RE BREAKING UP. SAY AGAIN?

WHAT HAVE WE HERE...?

WEIRD EQUIPMENT. HIGH POWER STUFF.

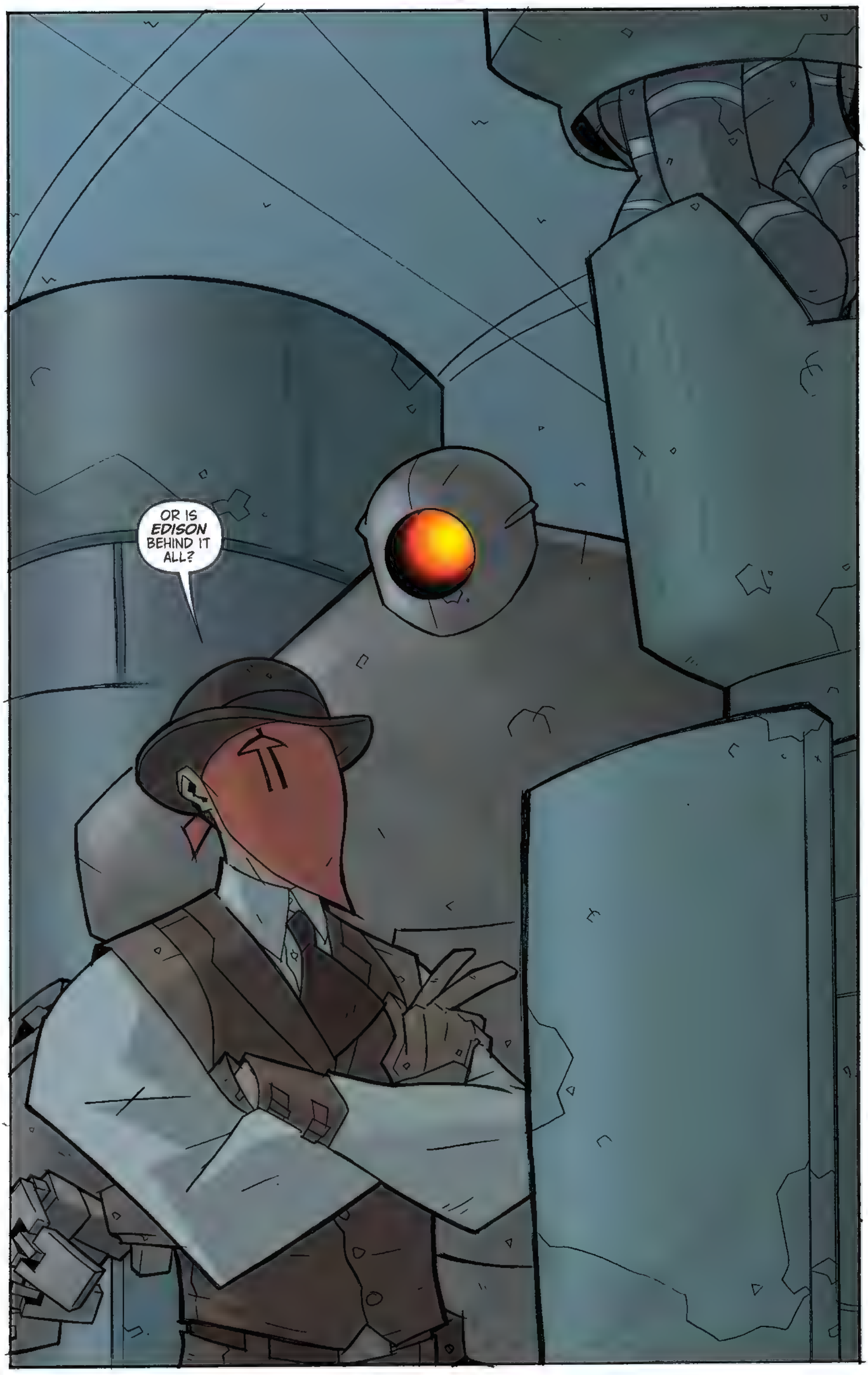
CAN'T [illegible] INDUSTR[illegible] EDISON.

WHAT'D HE--DID HE SAY EDISON?

SEEMS LIKE *HALF* THESE MACHINES ARE EDISON'S.

EDISON CO

[illegible]ISTERS USING HIS TECHN[illegible]


OR IS EDISON BEHIND IT ALL?

The Deadly Art of Science
Chapter 5
War of the Currents

UNDERGROUND

LOOKS LIKE EDISON'S BEEN USING THESE UNDERGROUND TUNNELS AS HIS OWN PRIVATE WAREHOUSE FOR A *WHILE.*

ARE YOU READING ME UP THERE?

KUNK

BOOM

BKOOM

WELL. CAN'T BLAME A GUY FOR TRYING.

STREET LEVEL

WHAT'D HE SAY ABOUT EDISON?

WHO CARES? THAT WAS A *GUNSHOT!* I'M GOING IN.

WHAT'DYA MEAN *YOU'RE* GOING IN?!

ROBO. THAT'S MY DAD DOWN THERE.

WHAT ABOUT THE COPS?

THE *POLICE?*

HERE, USE THIS.

WHO'D TAKE AT LEAST AN *HOUR* TO GET OUT HERE? *IF* THEY BELIEVE US IN THE FIRST PLACE?

AND *UNMASK* DAD AND THEN ARREST HIM FOR *A LOT OF MURDERS?* NO THANKS.

THEY WERE ALL *GANGSTERS.* THAT'S GOT TO COUNT FOR *SOMETHING.*

SOMETHING I DON'T WANT TO FIND OUT IN A COURT OF LAW. WE'RE WASTING TIME. I'M GOING IN.

CHI-CHAK

WELL?

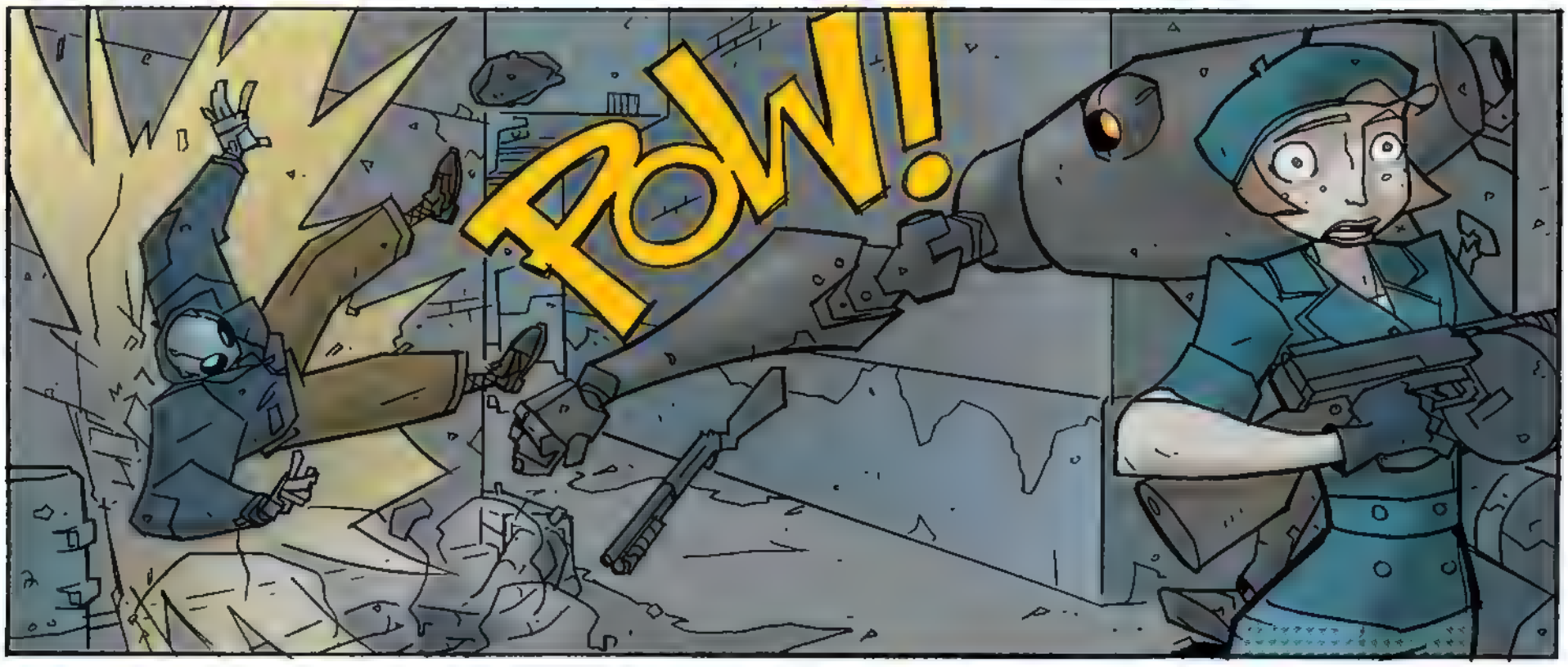
WE GO DOWN.

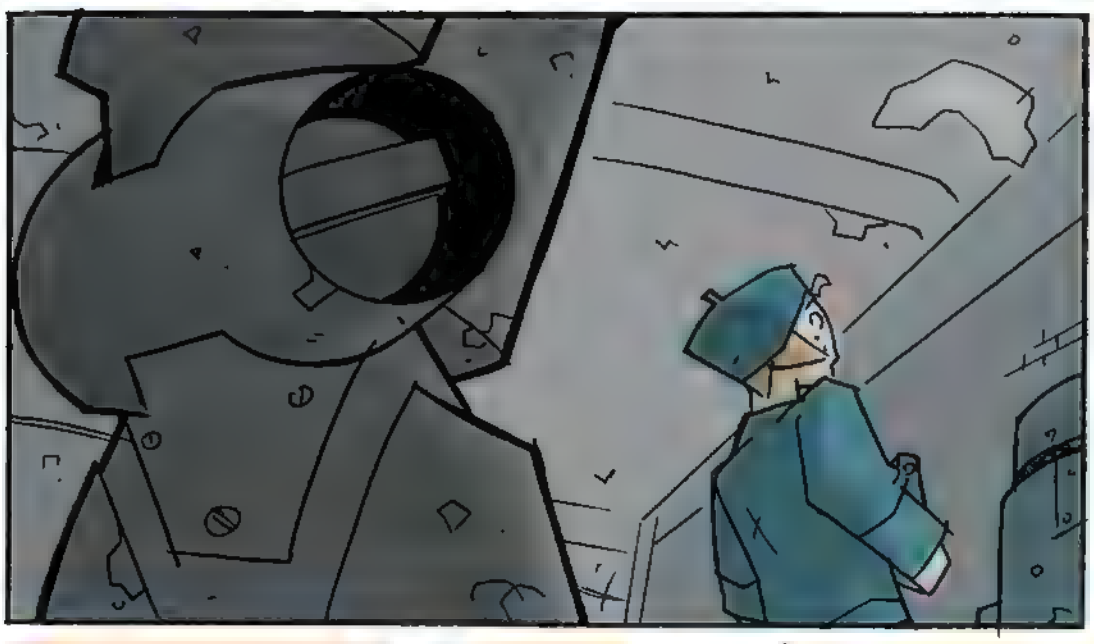
IS A SECRET SUBTERRANEAN PNEUMATIC TUBE NETWORK *SUPPOSED* TO LOOK LIKE THIS?

SEARCH ME.

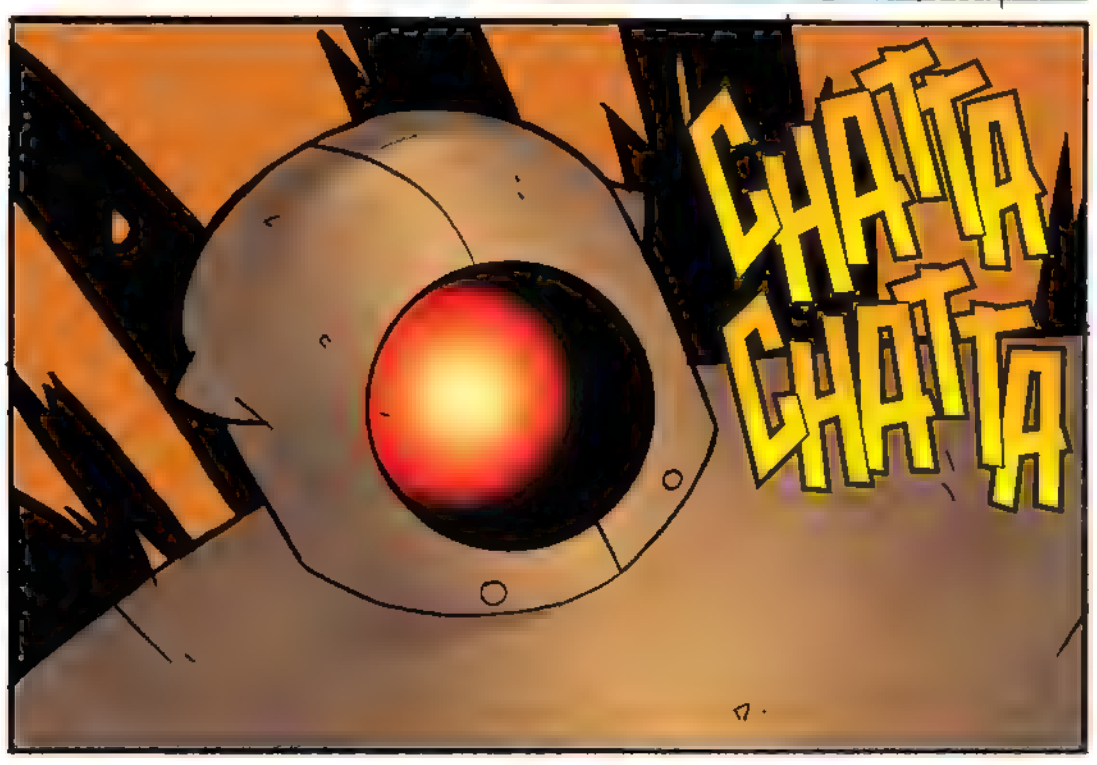
HOW'RE WE SUPPOSED TO FIND DAD IN ALL *THIS?*

LET'S JUST KEEP MOVING. HE CAN'T HAVE GOT FAR.


POW!



CHATTA
CHATTA


CHATTA
CHATTA

CHATTA CHA
KLICK
EDISON

CLICK
CLICK

MEANWHILE...
TSK! I'M GETTING SLOW IN MY OLD AGE.

MAYBE YOU COULD HAVE CALLED THE *POLICE.*

WE COULDN'T WAIT! YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN *KILLED!*

THEN THERE'D HAVE BEEN NO NEED TO HURRY, *WOULD* THERE?

YOU'RE RIGHT. WE *SHOULD* HAVE WAITED. THEN MAYBE YOU *WOULD* BE DEAD.

ARGUING WON'T SOLVE ANYTHING.

WHAT'S TO ARGUE? I THINK WE CAN *ALL* AGREE YOU TWO BOTCHED THE RESCUE.

YOU'RE JUST MAD HE TOOK YOUR HAT.

CLACK

EVERYTHING IS IN ORDER, I TRUST?

I'VE SEEN TO IT PERSONALLY. THE WORKERS ARE GONE FOR THE NIGHT AND THE MACHINE IS READY.

FANTASTIC. THE SKULL?

IT CONTINUES TO BAFFLE ME AS WELL AS OUR TECHNICIANS, BUT IT'S DOING SO ***EXACTLY*** WITHIN THE PARAMETERS YOU DESCRIBED AS "IDEAL."

BZZZ

AHOY-HOY.

BZZ BZBZZZ BZZZLB.

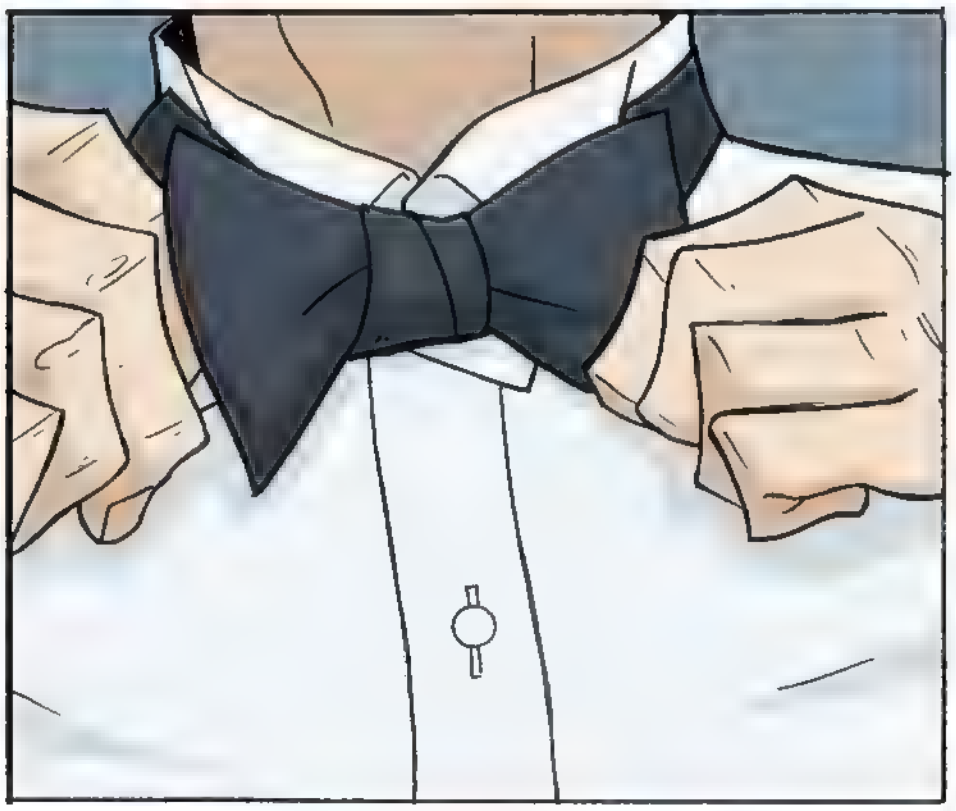
I ***SAY,*** YOU'VE BEEN BUSY, LAD.

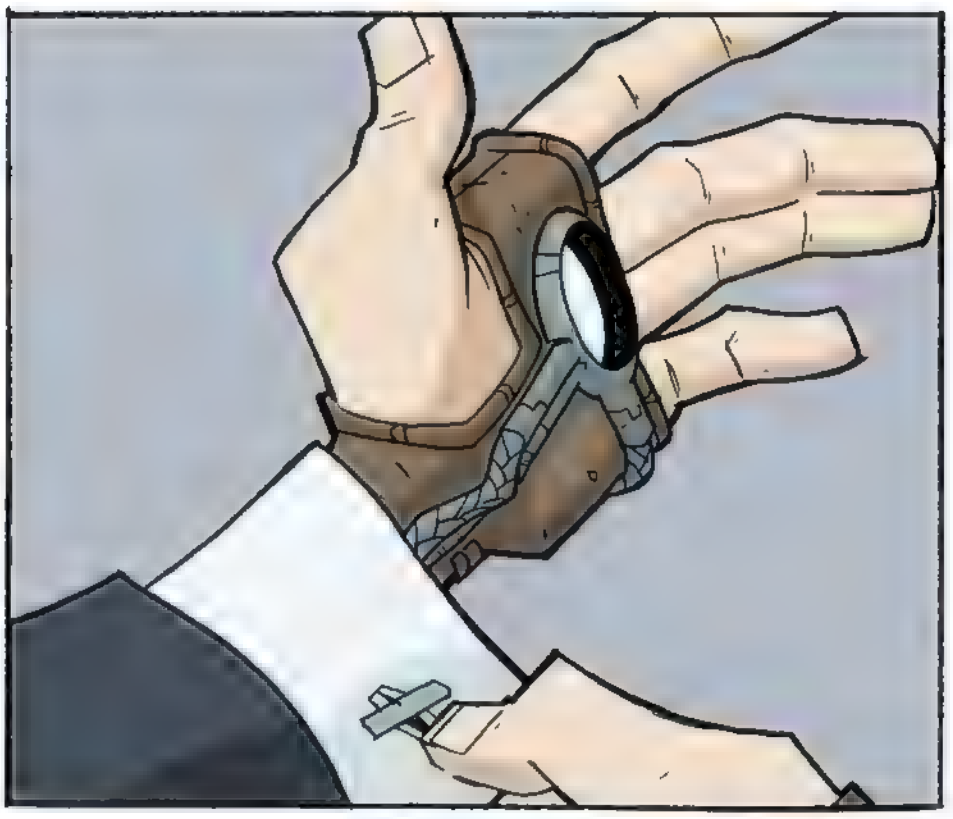
BZZ!

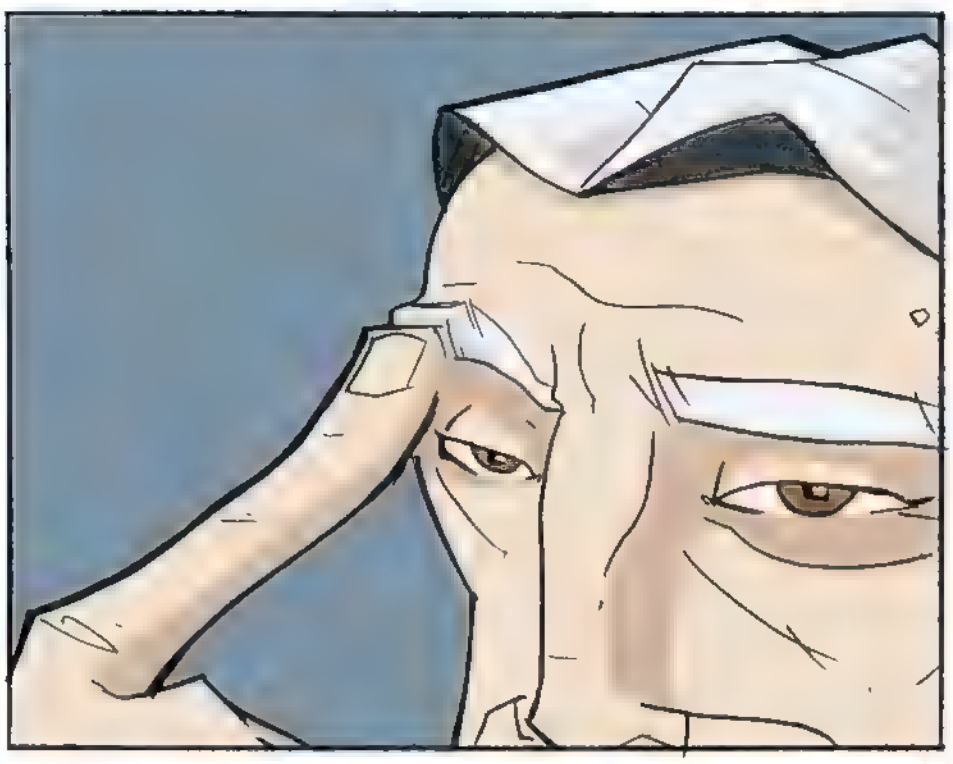
YES, OF COURSE. BRING THEM HERE. LET THEM BEAR WITNESS.

WELL. WE'RE NOT DEAD.

YET.







AH, JUST IN TIME.

YOU'RE KEEPING *UNUSUAL* COMPANY, ROBOT.

LEAVE THEM OUT OF IT! THIS IS BETWEEN YOU AND ME!

DO YOU HAVE THE *SLIGHTEST* IDEA WHAT "THIS" IS?

WELL, NO, NOT SPECIFICALLY.

*BUT I'M GONNA **STOP** YOU!*

STOP ME? YOU'RE NO MORE EQUIPPED TO STOP ME THAN YOU ARE TO ***VOTE.***

THAT'S THE CRYSTAL SKULL! ***YOU*** TOOK IT!

AND THE ANALYTIC COMPUTER ***AND*** THE RAY GUNS AND ***DOZENS*** OF OTHER COMPONENTS. YOUR NEXT QUESTION IS, *"WHY STEAL THEM?"*

WELL, WE WERE IN SOMETHING OF A ***HURRY.***

KLUNK

AND THE QUESTION AFTER THAT IS "WHY, WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT?"

THE ***ONE*** PROBLEM WITH BEING A GENIUS IS SLOWING DOWN TO EXPLAIN WHAT ***OUGHT*** TO BE VERY OBVIOUS TO EVERYONE WHO ***ISN'T.***

THIS IS WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT. THE ODIC CAPACITOR.

FANCY NAME FOR A SKULL IN A BOX.

DOLT. THE ODIC FORCE IS THE MOTIVE ENERGY UNDERLYING ALL PHENOMENON WITHIN THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE. IT IS THE FONT OF LIFE AND INTELLIGENCE. IT IS WHAT SEPARATES MEN FROM BEASTS, AND THE LIVING FROM BASE OBJECTS. SUCH AS YOURSELF, ***ROBOT.***

TONIGHT WILL BE THE CULMINATION OF ***FIFTY YEARS*** OF RESEARCH; OF EXPERIMENTATION. OF EFFECTING SUBTLE CHANGES TO MANHATTAN. THERE'S MORE STEEL CONCENTRATED IN NEW YORK CITY THAN ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD. THE CITY ITSELF IS AN ***ODIC CONDUIT.***

THE VITAL ENERGIES OF THE ***ENTIRE EARTH*** WILL BE CAST THROUGH THE LENS OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL OF LUBTAANTUN TO EMBUE ***ONE*** SUBJECT. AND THEN?

IMMORTALITY.

THAT'S AN AWFUL LOT OF TROUBLE TO COLLECT A **FICTIONAL** ENERGY.

HOW **FICTIONAL** WAS IT WHEN RASPUTIN'S SPIRIT ATTACKED YOUR HOME?

TOLD YOU I FOUGHT A GHOST.

STILL NOT BUYING THE BIT ABOUT A MONSTER FROM BEYOND THE UNIVERSE.

I'M GONNA DO TO THAT **MACHINE** OF YOURS WHAT I DID TO THE **GHOST.** WHICH IS: BLOW IT UP.

HA! YOU'RE ONLY HERE BECAUSE I ALLOWED IT, **ROBOT.**

YOU WERE STRIPPED OF ANY OPPORTUNITY YOU **MIGHT'VE** HAD TO UNDO MY LIFE'S WORK BEFORE YOU WERE **BROUGHT** HERE. YOUR GUNS ARE GONE. YOUR **VERY** MORTAL FRIENDS ARE MY CAPTIVES.

AND **MY** ROBOT CAN TEAR YOU IN HALF.

ALL YOU CAN DO NOW IS WATCH AS THE FUTURE BENDS TOWARD MY WILL.

THUNK

ZAK KAZAN

THIS IS A LITTLE OUTSIDE MY JURISDICTION. ANY IDEA WHAT'S HAPPENING?

EDISON IS GOING TO ENDANGER LIFE ON EITHER A **GLOBAL** OR **LOCAL** SCALE. NOT SURE WHICH YET.

THEODORE?

WE ARE WITHIN YOUR PROJECTIONS. ***BARELY.***

INCREASE OUTPUT ACCORDING TO ***SCHEDULE C.***

THAT COULD BURN OUT ***HALF*** THE DYNAMOS.

DO IT. WE HAVE ONE CHANCE. THERE'S NO TURNING BACK. THE DYNAMOS WILL HOLD.

DYNAMOS?

ODIC FORCE DOESN'T FALL OUT OF THE ***SKY.*** MY DIRECT CURRENT DYNAMOS ARE ***HARMONIZING*** THE STEEL SUPER-STRUCTURES OF MANHATTAN'S SKYSCRAPERS AND BRIDGES TO DRAW OUT OD.

ZRAKKABOOM

HMM.

PING PING PING PING

BROADWAY

IF I MY HAVE YOUR ATTENTION.

I MUST ASK YOU TO STAND BACK, *PLEASE.*

OH, AND DO HOLD THESE.

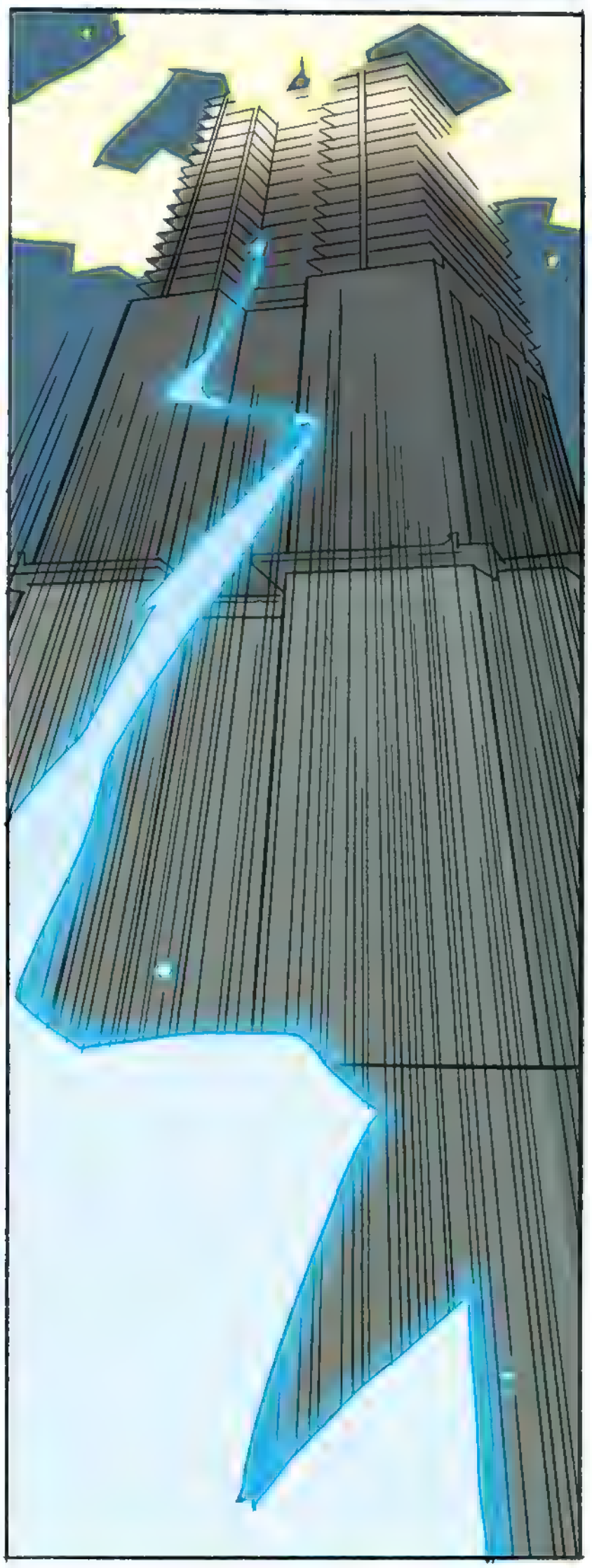
ER...?

I WON'T BE BUT A MOMENT.

PING PING PING PING

FWSHHH

HHHHHHHHHH



THOMAS.

STOP THIS. YOU HAVEN'T ENOUGH ***DIRECT CURRENT*** DYNAMOS IN THE CITY TO SUSTAIN A STABLE ODIC RESONANCE. I SAW TO THAT ***FORTY*** YEARS AGO.

MR. *TESLA?*

NIAGARA WAS A ***SETBACK,*** NOT A ***DEFEAT!***

ZUMM

WE ARE OFFICIALLY OUT OF OUR LEAGUE.

NO QUESTION.

I'M NOT DOIN' ANY BETTER.

IT'S A MATTER OF ***MATHEMATICS.*** YOU ***WILL*** DESTROY MANHATTAN IF YOU PERSIST IN THIS DELUSIONAL ***FANTASY!***

YOU WOULD LECTURE ***ME*** ON DELUSIONS WHILE CHASING YOUR ***MAD*** DREAM TO TELE-TRANSPORT MATTER? YOU'VE LOST NOTHING OF THAT FAMOUS ARROGANCE IN YOUR OLD AGE.

ARROGANCE IS RISKING *MILLIONS* OF LIVES FOR YOUR *PERSONAL* AMBITION.

ZZZZK

OH, NIKOLA. HONESTLY. BLASTING EACH OTHER LIKE *WIZARDS* WON'T GET US ANYWHERE. VIOLENCE IS WHAT THE *ROBOTS* ARE FOR.

I THINK NOT.

KRN

HOLY SOCKS.

KRAKABOOOM

WRANG

THEODORE! FULL POWER!

BUT--

NOW! I WILL NOT BE UNDONE IN THE ELEVENTH HOUR!

RUN, THEODORE. THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR YOU TO DO!

ZUMMMMM

KLONG

BZZ

THIS IS ODIC FORCE, NIKOLA!

NOT SO TOUGH WITHOUT OPTICS OR HIGHER BRAIN FUNCTIONS, ARE YA!

FALL DOWN ALREADY!

WRAWG

I WILL BRING IMMORTALITY TO THE MASSES.

IT WILL BE MY HAND THAT GUIDES THE COURSE OF HUMAN AFFAIRS. NOT YOURS OR YOUR ABSURD METAL MAN. YOU'VE LOST.

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS. YOU'VE LOST.

AHHH!

LEAVE HIM ALONE!

KABOOM

YOU *COULDN'T* HAVE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE *THAT* SIMPLE TO STOP ME.

ROBO!

GUN!

GOT IT!

NO, WAIT, THAT'S NOT WHAT I--

BKAM

PLINK

THE SKULL...!

KBOOOOM

MR. TESLA, ARE YOU--

QUITE ALL RIGHT, YES. THIS ISN'T MY FIRST TIME AT THE RODEO, YOU KNOW.

HOW DID YOU--

WE'RE DOING FINE TOO!

OH, GOSH!

SORRY!

NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE. I'D BE CONCERNED ABOUT MY DAD TOO.

EVEN IF HE'S AN OLD CRANK SOMETIMES.

NOT USED TO BEING USELESS IN A FIGHT.

USELESS? MR. JACK, YOUR GUN SAVED THE DAY.

YES, WELL. ALWAYS A GOOD IDEA TO CARRY A SPARE.

SO, DID WE WIN?

I THINK SO.

HOW DID YOU. WHAT WERE THE.

HOW DID YOU?!

OH, THIS OLD THING? IT'S MY TELLURIC SUIT. HAVEN'T HAD TO USE IT SINCE BEFORE YOU CAME ABOUT.

BEEN TINKERING WITH IT TO WORK AGAINST ODIC VIBRATIONS SINCE I BECAME AWARE OF THOMAS'S INTENTIONS LAST YEAR.

LAST YEAR?! WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY ANYTHING!

IT DIDN'T CONCERN YOU.

DIDN'T CONCERN ME?!

IT'S OLD WAR OF THE CURRENTS BUSINESS.

DIRECT CURRENT HARMONIZES WITH THIS ODIC FORCE THAT SO POSSESSED THOMAS'S IMAGINATION.

HE SOUGHT TO POPULARIZE DIRECT CURRENT SO THAT HE MIGHT SEED THE CITY WITH ENOUGH DYNAMOS TO DRAW OUT THE OD OF THE ENTIRE EARTH AND DISTILL IT INTO AN IMMORTALITY FORMULA.

INCIDENTALLY ALLOWING HIM TO BECOME THE DE FACTO RULER OF THE WORLD BY CONTROLLING THE SOURCE OF IMMORTALITY.

IGNORING FOR A MOMENT THE SOCIOLOGICALLY CATASTROPHIC IMPLICATIONS OF SELLING INDEFINITE LIFE EXTENSION TO THE RICHEST ONE PERCENT OF THE RICHEST ONE PERCENT...

...THE PROCESS WAS A DANGEROUS AND UNSUSTAINABLE INVERSION OF POORLY UNDERSTOOD ENERGIES ON A WORLDWIDE SCALE.

I DEVELOPED ALTERNATING CURRENT TO PUT AN END TO IT. ANCIENT HISTORY.

ALTERNATING CURRENT. YOU...YOU INVENTED **ALTERNATING CURRENT** TO STOP THOMAS EDISON FROM **MAYBE** DESTROYING THE WORLD?

SOMEONE HAD TO.

MR. TESLA? WHAT HAPPENED TO MR. ***EDISON?***

SCIENTIFIC MISADVENTURE, I'M AFRAID. ***CONSUMED*** BY THE VERY THING HE DESIRED.

WE HAVEN'T BEEN PROPERLY INTRODUCED. I'M NIKOLA TESLA.

JACK TAROT.

YOU'RE ***MENTORING*** MY ROBO, YES?

YYYYYES.

HE SPEAKS HIGHLY OF YOU.

AND THIS MUST BE THE LOVELY ***HELEN*** HE'S SO ***SECRETIVE*** ABOUT.

MR. TESLA!

YOU ***ASHAMED*** OF ME, ROBO?

MR. ***TESLA!***

LATER...

Robo,

TESL
INDU

When I first set upon this case, I never could have imagined where it would take me.

I had no idea I would spend the better part of a year living with and training a very obnoxious robot.

What a ridiculous sentence.

Robo

Training you was an endless series of maddening frustration. I hope to never do it again. But it was an honor to work with you.

P.S. Enclosed is the bill for the hat Edison's robot destroyed. What a ridiculous sentence.

P.P.S. Oh, yes. And your own gun.

WEBLEY MK. 6

God help us all.

THE BEGINNING.

TESLADYNE, WAR ROOM
MAR 30, 2010
3:41AM EST

GENTLEMEN.

EARLIER TODAY **CERN'S** LARGE HADRON COLLIDER CONDUCTED A PROTON BEAM EXPERIMENT AT SEVEN **TRILLION** ELECTRONVOLTS.

WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THIS EXPERIMENT CREATED A **CLOSED TIME-LIKE CURVE.**

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING. THAT'S NOT **NEARLY** ENOUGH ENERGY TO DISTORT SPACE-TIME.

BUT IT APPEARS THE PROTON BEAMS TWISTED INTO THE **FIFTH CARDINAL** DIRECTION, **ZORTH,** AND THAT CONTORTED LOCAL TOPOGRAPHY IN, TO BE TECHNICAL ABOUT IT, **REAL BAD WAYS.**

I WON'T SUGARCOAT IT. THIS THING **WILL** RUPTURE THE CAUSALITY OF ABOUT TEN TO TWELVE PERCENT OF THE OBSERVABLE UNIVERSE. AND IT'S UNCLEAR WHAT EFFECT THAT'LL HAVE ON THE **REST.**

WE NEED TO BREAK THE LOOP **WITHOUT** BREAKING **REALITY.**

ANANTH, GEORGE. THAT'S WHERE **YOU** COME IN.

UH.

ROBO? YOU **DO** KNOW WE'RE JUST THE **GRAVE-YARD** SHIFT GUYS, RIGHT?

I DO **SPREADSHEETS** MOSTLY.

I KNOW THIS IS OUTSIDE YOUR EXPERTISE, BUT YOU DIDN'T GET HERE BY HAVING MEDIOCRE BRAINS.

PLUS **I'M** THE LEADING ZORTH THEORIST **AND** WE'VE GOT THE WORLD'S FOREMOST EXPERT ON THE **LHC.**

IN FACT, **HE** BROUGHT THE PROBLEM TO OUR ATTENTION.

IT IS I! THE EXPERT! HOW VERY UNEXPECTED!

ROBO!

LOOK OUT!

GEORGE? I DON'T THINK IT'S LOADED.

BUT IT'S, IT'S--

HRUFF.

IT'S DR. DINOSAUR. AND HE'S HERE TO HELP US. HE KNOWS THE LARGE HADRON COLLIDER LIKE THE BACK OF HIS HAND.

YEAH, FROM TRYING TO BLOW IT UP.

THE TIME-SPACE IS IN DIRE JEOPARDY. WE ARE ON A TEAM-UP. DO YOU OBJECT TO IT!

DON'T YOU MEAN SPACE-TIME?

I DO NOT TELL YOU HOW TO EXCRETE MOISTURE FROM YOUR STINK GLANDS, AND I WILL THANK YOU NOT TO TELL ME HOW THE MANIFOLD COMPLEXITY OF THE UNIVERSE WORKS.

WE CAN GET BACK TO HATING EACH OTHER **AFTER** WE SAVE THE WORLD FROM TOTAL TIME IMPLOSION. **OKAY?**

HE STARTED IT! WITH HIS IGNORANCE!

GET 'IM OFF, GET 'IM OFF!

40,000FT ABOVE THE ATLANTIC 10 HOURS LATER

WE NEED A **REAL** PLAN, **STOP** TALKING ABOUT **CRYSTALS!** THEY'RE **NEW AGE** HOKUM!

FALSE. THE MESOZOIC AGE WAS **ANCIENT!**

ONLY **THESE** CRYSTALS CAN RE-ALIGN THE FLOW OF TIME-SPACE. PEN AND PAPER! I SHALL GRAPH IT.

LARGE HADRON COLLIDER, SWITZERLAND

WE REALIZE THIS IS **UNORTHODOX,** DR. HEUER.

BUT TRUST US. WE **MOSTLY** KNOW WHAT WE'RE DOING.

WORRY NOT! I AM ACTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH ALL POSTED SAFETY MEASURES. **BEHOLD!**

WE'RE ONLINE, ROBO. **BIG TIME** ZORTH INTERACTIONS. DR. D WAS RIGHT.

WE SHOULD SET UP HIS...

CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SAYING THIS.

...HIS **CRYSTAL MATRIX.**

AT LAST, THE VOICE OF REASON. I SHALL JUST UNPACK IT. NOTHING UNUSUAL.

CRYSTAL

BUT OUR COLLIDER DOESN'T POSE THE *SLIGHTEST* DANGER.

CLICK

NOT ORDINARILY, BUT--

CRAAASH

HROAAAR!

AAAHH!

AAAHHH!

AAAHHH!

SECRETLY IT WAS AN ELABORATE RUSE!

HROAAAAR!

NOT ME, FOOL!

CLICK

HROAAAR!

THAT IS NOT THE CORRECT REACTION AT ALL.

YOU ARE MEANT TO OBEY MY COMMANDS VIA--

KILL

DESTROY

KILL

HROAAAAR!

OH. I SEE.

EVACUATE THE FACILITY!

AHH!

WHAT HATH MAD SCIENCE WROUGHT?!

KRASH

AHH!

AHHHHH!

GO LIMP!

HRUAAAAK!

AHHHHH!

HEY, UGLY.

OVER HERE!

CHEE-CHOO-CHOO
CHEE-CHOO-CHOO

SNOPIT!

HACK

CATCH

WHAT?

THOOM

BOOM

OTHER THAN EVERYTHING GOING COMPLETELY WRONG, IT'S ALL GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN!

C'MERE!

WHAT DID YOU DO?

HRK!

THIS WAS NOT THE PLAN. YOU WERE ONLY SUPPOSED TO DIE!

OH, WELL, IN THAT CASE, EVERYTHING IS FORGIVEN.

WHAT DID YOU DO?

IS IT NOT CLEAR? I EXPOSED A T-REX EGG TO TIMEVOLUTION ENERGIES TO PRODUCE THE ULTIMATE KILLING MACHINE: FUTURESAURUS REX!

IT EVOLVED TO HAVE MISSILE LAUNCHERS?

HROAAAAR!

AHHHH!

OBVIOUSLY. WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENS IN TIMELIKE LOOPS?

I'LL TELL YOU WHY YOU'RE STUPID LATER. WE'VE GOT BIGGER PROBLEMS.

ROBO?

ANANTH? GO AHEAD.

ROBO, WE'VE GOT TO STOP THAT THING BEFORE IT RIPS THE PLACE APART.

ALL I'VE GOT IS HARSH LANGUAGE.

I THINK WE'LL NEED SOMETHING STRONGER THAN THAT.

KSHHHK. DO WE HAPPEN TO POSSESS AN ENORMOUS CACHE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS? KSSHK.

YOU DON'T MAKE THE NOISE! AND WHERE'D YOU **GET** THAT ANYWAY?

I DON'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN EVERY LITTLE IMPOSSIBLE THING TO YOU!

A THOUGHT OCCURS. THIS FACILITY IS A TWENTY-SEVEN KILOMETER LONG ***PROTON CANNON.***

LET'S CALL THAT **PLAN DOING IT IMMEDIATELY.**

ALREADY ON IT. YOU'LL HAVE TO SPLIT UP IF WE'RE GONNA PULL THIS OFF BEFORE THE ACCELERATORS ARE ***TOTALED.***

THIS ISN'T OVER.

I CONCUR ***SO MUCH.***

MOVING OUT. DROP A WAYPOINT IN MY BRAIN AND TELL ME WHAT TO DO WHEN I GET THERE.

KSHHHK. TRANSMIT YOUR **FEEBLE** INSTRUCTIONS! KSHHHK.

SOON...

IT IS DONE. YOUR MEAGER SUPERMAGNETS ARE ONLINE. KSHHHK.

SKREEEEEK

COOLANT RELEASED.

HROAAAAR!

BANG BANG BANG

THOOM KRABOOM BOOM

AHHHH!

ALL WE HAVE TO DO NOW IS LURE FUTURESAURUS REX INTO THE FIRING CHAMBER.

WE AREN'T ***SERIOUSLY*** CALLING IT THAT, ARE WE?

AND SOON! IT WILL CONTINUE TO TIMEVOLVE INTO AN INVINCIBLE KILLING MACHINE WITH NO OFF SWITCH APPARENTLY DO NOT LOOK AT ME IT IS NOT MY FAULT.

I WANT IT KNOWN MY PARTICIPATION HERE ***IN NO WAY*** CONDONES THE LOGIC OF WHATEVER DR. DINOSAUR JUST SAID.

I THINK THAT GOES FOR ALL OF US.

GUYS, I'M GONNA HAVE YOU FLANK, UH, ***REX*** AND FLUSH HIM OUT. ROBO, I'M SENDING YOUR WAYPOINT. DR. D, I'LL TALK YOU THROUGH IT.

HOW'RE YOU COORDINATING THAT WITH ***SPREAD-SHEETS?***

BECAUSE I AM THE ***WIZARD*** OF ALL SPREADSHEETS.

22 SECONDS LATER...

DON'T KNOW HOW I GOT TALKED INTO THIS...

HROAAAAR!

BOOMBOOM CHATTACHATTA BOOM

AAAAAHHHH!

POWER IT UP!

AAAAAHHHH!

BUT WE MUST PRECISELY TIME THE--

POWER IT UP!

THIS WAS YOUR BIG PLAN, *WIZARD?*

WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS WE *LEARNED* GIANT RAMPAGING FUTURESAURUS *TRUMPS* WIZARD.

LET'S SEE HOW IT DOES AGAINST *SCIENCE.* FIRING IN..

THREE...

SMASH

TWO...

ONE!

ZZZmmmmm!

FIRE!

BOOM

FRANCE, NEAR THE SWISS BORDER

FWAM

DID WE GET IT?

FUTURESAURUS IS, UH, VAPORIZED.

WHAT ABOUT DR. DINOSAUR?

NO RADIO CONTACT. WE'RE SENDING EXPLORATORY TEAMS INTO THE ACCELERATOR NOW.

SWITZERLAND, NEAR THE FRENCH BORDER

CERN

END